

# MACMILLAN'S MAGAZINE.

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THOMAS EDWARD BROWN.<sup>1</sup>

MEN of letters, in spite of their numerous failings, are victims to at least one generous impulse; when they come into possession of a good thing, they needs must invite their fellow-creatures to share the windfall. With them there is no secret drinking, no furtive, private degustation of a glorious wine; but when the cask of hypocras or malvoisie arrives, they fling open their doors, withdraw the spigot, turn on the tap, and invite the world at large to fill its cups. Compelled by this longing for company in the enjoyment of good cheer some men and women, who were honoured by the intimacy of the late T. E. Brown, have commissioned one of their number to edit, print, and publish a selection of letters from his correspondence, in full confidence that what they offer to the world is good, and ashamed to enjoy by themselves a treat which should be a universal merry-making.

Mr. Irwin has done his work well and with a scrupulous delicacy, though this was a case in which all the circumstances made delicacy no less difficult than imperative. The correspondence of a man so rich in sympathy, of such abundant humour, so unrestrained in pouring out his views on all the aspects of any given man or book or situation, was not

a thing to be lightly given to the world in its entirety, while all the susceptibilities likely to be wounded were still open to attack. It is barely three years since Brown died, and much that he has said was said of living persons, or of men and women and things by them consecrated; and there was this further difficulty, Brown never did understand, never could understand that people object to being laughed at. Himself in some of his aspects the supremest of jokes to himself, he could not believe that others were incapable of a similar detachment; with him it was all but an axiom that you may love a man and yet laugh at him, love him the more for laughing, and laugh the more for loving; he was amazed, no less than grieved, if ever it was brought home to him that, in the rush of irresponsible fun, he had hurt, when he intended to amuse. Let it not for a moment be supposed that with the purpose of winning cheap applause he deliberately caricatured the weaknesses of his friends or pilloried their little failings; his fun arose naturally out of the situation, unsought for, free from the slightest tinge of malice. Secure in the correct interpretation of his motive by those immediately around him, he gave the reins to his prodigal fancy, and by those who really knew him was seldom misunderstood; but the situation is now changed; now this ineffable fooling would have to be submitted to those

<sup>1</sup>THE LETTERS OF THOMAS EDWARD BROWN, AUTHOR OF FO'C'SLE YARNS; edited, with an Introductory Memoir, by Sidney T. Irwin, M.A. Two volumes: London, 1900.

who did not know him, who would see in his words a reason for thinking lightly of many whom he truly valued, and till the time has come when such mistakes shall be of no importance, the lighter utterances of Brown must remain a sealed book. Mr. Irwin has most carefully, and in the very spirit of the writer, struck out every letter, every line, which might give pain by misconception.

Men have wondered why Brown had such a reputation, why those who knew him spoke of him only in the superlative, what there was in the author of *FO'C'S'LE YARNS* to command adoration. Part of the answer to these questions is to be found in the selected letters, but after all only a part. The letters give us much, but they cannot give us the glorious voice, full, resonant, tender, perhaps the very grandest instrument of human speech; they cannot give us the flexible mouth, the flashing teeth, the eyes, "great dabs of blue light with black at the bottom," nor the whimsical transitions from gravest grave to gayest gay, introduced by some subtle change in attitude or accent which prepared his hearers for the jump, and made his conversation one great continuous whole. It was possible to spend hour after hour, day after day in Brown's society without wearying, for he could listen as well as talk, and then there was always something elusive in him, a secret which you wished to penetrate, a Brown beyond the Brown, who ate and laughed and walked and smoked and fooled with you. It was like exploring a great rich country whose frontiers were for ever receding; climb one hill, and beyond the rich plains that opened to your view was yet another hill, and yet another; no man ever claimed to have traversed the whole territory. Proteus himself was not more changeable nor more

fugacious; if you wanted fire, he gave you fire, and while you were spreading your hands to the blaze, he dashed himself in your face, cold water, or sped away, a whirl of chaff.

Of all this there is a good deal in the letters, and those who read them in search of opinions with which to prop their own feebleness will be disappointed; what is to be made of a man to whom one day black is white, and another day pea-green, and yet another day orthodox black again? But for all that there is one consistent personality running through the whole book, one doctrine which never fails; there is always the Brown who took the world as he found it, who believed that God sent us into the world to enjoy it, and to make it a place of enjoyment for others, and who had in himself such a supreme faculty for enjoyment, that his joy was contagious, and of itself, by itself, without premeditation, without effort, made the world enjoyable to all. We see our stern philanthropists shake saddened heads: our Marthas, cumbered with much serving of poor tattered humanity, tighten their patient lips; Mrs. Grundy looms awful on the horizon; but what have such as these done to lighten the general burden, that this great humanist left undone? The weakness of the philanthropic constitution is its tendency to see cases and classes, not men and women; to your active earnest philanthropists three fourths of mankind are so much raw material to be worked up into something different, and the remaining fourth exists for the purposes of vicarious mendicancy. In many of its manifestations philanthropy becomes positively inhuman, while only the fewest of its disciples are able to resist the manifold seductions of an easy popularity, of power lightly earned, to avoid fanaticism and fussiness. The man

who deliberately goes about to do good steers a difficult course; sailing serenely before the wind of virtuous endeavour, he is not infrequently carried blindly round on unimagined whirlpools to be sucked into depths of hideous blackness. In Brown there was no set purpose of philanthropy, but there was a far-reaching inextinguishable love of his fellow-men, a comprehensive love which that of the professed philanthropist is not. He loved conversing with the wayfarers, with the peasantry of his own island or of any country in which he happened to be, but simply on the footing of a common humanity; and again he was equally at home, equally happy, equally interested, when his company was learned or rich. This catholicity of sympathy absolutely genuine and unaffected, this real recognition of equality, lies a step above the standard ordinarily reached by the conscious humanitarian.

A striking illustration of Brown's peculiar humanity occurs in the following letter, which gives us also a picture of his father, a somewhat stern, scholarly clergyman cut on the eighteenth century pattern.

Yes, the man was right. I do love the poor wasters, and you are right, I have it from my father. He had a way of taking for granted not only the innate virtue of these outcasts, but their unquestioned respectability. He at least never questioned it. The effect was twofold.

Some of the "weak brethren" felt uncomfortable at being met on those terms of equality. My father might have been practising on them the most dreadful irony; and they were "that shy" and confused. But it was not irony, not a bit of it; just a sense of respect, fine consideration for the poor "souls," well—respect, that's it, respect for all human beings; *his* respect made them respectable. Wasn't it grand? . . . Pitying with an eternal pity, but not exposing, not rebuking. My father would have considered he was "taking a liberty" if he had confronted the sinner with his sin.

Doubtless he carried this too far. But don't suppose for a moment that the "weak brethren" thought he was conniving at their weakness. Not they,—they saw the delicacy of his conduct. You don't think,—do you?—that these poor souls are incapable of appreciating delicacy. God only knows how far down into their depths of misery and degradation the sweetness of that delicacy descends. It haunts the drunkard's dreams, and breathes a breath of purity into the bosom of the abandoned. That is the power of a noble innocence, a respect for our fellow-creatures,—glib phrases, but how little understood and acted on! With my father it was quite natural,—he was a hot hater, though, I can tell you. He hated hypocrisy, he hated lying, and he hated presumption, and pretentiousness. He loved sincerity, truth, and modesty. It seemed as if he felt sure that, with these virtues, the others could not fail to be present. Was he far wrong? Yet many people would have thought him stern.

It was just this delicacy which was the special strength of the son; he did not confine its exercise to wasters, he extended it to all alike, even to those who might think themselves justified in shrinking from wasters, or regarding them solely as a field for the exercise of strenuous benevolence. No man was ever further from damning sins he had no mind to; here are the concluding lines of a letter written during a tour in Wales:

No trippers, not even tourists,—a perfect cessation of the enemy, a cessation of all enemies, except perhaps the tipping of the natives; but there, I am no great enemy of tipping. It is true they lie down drunk in the streets, but they look so rosy, and altogether comely in their honest cups; and besides, I am such a poor sleeper, that I envy any one sound asleep wherever indulged, and however induced.

Professionally Brown was a schoolmaster; the scene of his scholastic activities for nearly twenty years was Clifton College, that splendid second birth of the Arnoldian ideal.

As a schoolmaster he lived in the atmosphere of the straitest sect of the Pharisees, not of the Pharisees who were hypocrites, but of the Pharisees who were scrupulous, earnest, exacting, who indeed imposed burdens but themselves cheerfully bore the burdens that they laid on others. Doubtless there were those to whom Brown in such a position was the squarest of pegs in the roundest of holes, and he himself has given sanction to such a conception by a short poem, published in the latest collection of his verse, in which he comprehensively anathematises his brethren in the person of a "truculent quack."

Brown certainly did not become a schoolmaster because he was in love with the profession. At the outset of his career it was open to him to remain at Oxford a celibate Fellow of Oriel, able to command a large income from pupils, exercising his wit in the Common-Room, reading at his leisure, innocently elevated by the consciousness of a seat at the centre of the universe; but, true man that he was, he did not see his soul's health in celibacy. Marriage was a necessity to him: he could not live by books alone, he must have love, the opportunity for the expansion of his tenderness, he must bear the whole burden of human responsibilities; but he could not afford to wait for an income. Thus we find him for a short time head-master of the Crypt School at Gloucester and afterwards master of the Modern Side at Clifton, where he remained till 1892. Again we have a strange perversity of destiny, for the master of the Modern Side was a Hellenist of the purest water; hear him on the subject of Greek.

Yes, you would fill the school to overflowing, of course you would, as long as other places did not abandon the old lines. But it would be detestable

treachery to the cause of education, of humanity. To me the *learning* of any blessed thing is a matter of little moment. Greek is not *learned* by nineteen twentieths of our public-schoolboys. But it is a baptism into a cult, a faith not more irrational than other faiths and cults; the baptism of a regeneration which releases us from I know not what original sin; and if aman does not see that, he is a fool, such a fool that I shouldn't wonder if he gravely asked me to explain what I mean by original sin in such a connexion.

It would, however, be a gross injustice to assume that Brown took upon himself duties which he hated, or responsibilities which he neglected. The responsibilities of a schoolmaster are capable of being exaggerated, as well as of being wholesomely exercised. Brown kicked privately at the abuses of pedagogy; in his heart of hearts he felt that many of his colleagues were surrendering some privileges of our common humanity in obedience to laws imposed with a reckless indifference to the well-being of those who were called upon to wield as well as obey them; he saw the injustice of loading schoolmasters with the burden of the vicarious virtue of parents, who are not always themselves virtuous, or enlightened, or refined, or anything that gives them a right to prescribe the conduct of men who are all these things. Thus his quarrel was not with Clifton but, as he himself says in one of his letters, with any place where there were boys; not that he objected to the boys, as boys, but to the apparently inevitable conditions imposed by life in a puerile community, nor did he willingly submit to that modern conception of a schoolmaster which makes him the servant not the master of his pupils. Surely there is a great deal to be said for Brown's view; he was quite content to practise honourably and generously the duties of his profession, but not the



exaggerated duties of his profession; the boys must come up to him, he must not be required to go down to them. He was a house-master and the boys in his house had a distinctive character of their own, though there was a suspicion that he did not entirely devote himself to them; but perhaps they were none the worse for knowing that somewhere in the background of the establishment was one Brown, who could on occasion use words which made you feel miserably small and uncomfortably naked, and who could be relied on to set an illimitable quantity of lines. Confronted with the sterner difficulties of a schoolmaster, he sometimes uttered a few sentences in his own house which told beyond its walls and braced the moral sense of the whole school.

The boys knew him best by his occasional sermons in chapel, or by his addresses in Big School on Sunday evenings, and here Brown was incorrigible; put him on a platform or in a pulpit, and in ten minutes he was clean off his feet, borne into a region where prudence is not supreme legislator.

An illustration of what used to happen is supplied by a letter written from the Isle of Man after he had retired from Clifton.

My lecture in Douglas on "Old Kirk Braddan" was a failure. The people were most hearty and indulgent; so it must have been my own fault. Portraits of my father, and my brother Hugh, were botched and feeble. You will not see them. The fact is the people were too indulgent, stimulated me to unstinted mimicry,—buffonery,—what you will. And they laughed and laughed, till with horror I awoke to the consciousness that I was treating the old Braddan life as a school of comedy, of which my father constituted the central figure and protagonist. Some tender things I believe I said, but the subjective condition of my hearers, aggravated by my own impu-

dence, carried everything away into a whirling gulf of farce. *Vae mihi!*

Hence it was that a Sunday evening lecture from Brown was a treat to which all the masters, and the more intelligent boys, looked forward; however excellent his intentions (and to avoid mishaps he invariably wrote at least his sermons), however deep and painful the subsequent contrition, every knowing man or boy in the room was bound to be simmering with wholesome mirth before the end of the lecture. He would jump from a sympathetic exposition of a poet to a discourse on criticism, and before his audience knew where they were, they were listening to an imaginary dialogue between Dr. Johnson and Matthew Arnold in Heaven; he would begin with some wise and sensible observations on manners, admonish the company to be tender of the weaknesses of their fellow-men, bethink himself of St. Paul "who suffered fools gladly," and then away to a discourse on the right way to treat fools, on the pleasure to be got out of them by careful handling, and he would end with a very solemn recommendation that men should be economical in their use of fools. It was not safe to ask him to lecture on hymns, for he would remember the bad ones as well as those of which he approved, and he would leave in his hearers' minds no shadow of a doubt as to which he thought bad and why he thought them so. Even in chapel he was once so far left to himself as to give illustrations of the impropriety of tacking the Doxology on to all Psalms irrespective of the context. Similarly in the pulpit he would abandon his written sermon and start on themes which, though reverently and strongly handled, were better suited to another audience. If there

is truth in wine, there is to many men truth on the platform; they must say what they think or feel at the time; old irritations assert themselves; the power of saying well, what were better left unsaid, exercises an irresistible beguilement; and so the great instrument of Brown's mind quivering under the excitement of public speaking responded unexpectedly, over vehemently, to some forgotten touch.

In this fact you have the whole man, the explanation of the inconsistencies that often astonished and puzzled his acquaintance. There may have been, and, as he thought so, there probably was, an inner inaccessible Brown living its own life impervious to shocks from outside, but the Brown with which his fellow-men came into contact, the external, approachable, but not permeable Brown, was a full-stringed instrument tuned to respond to any note that might be sounded in its vicinity; and the response was always stronger and fuller than the exciting note. No note that was genuine and true, however feeble, however encumbered or confused with its enharmonics, failed to meet with its answering note. Thus, however far he might be from the ordinary life of his colleagues, there was always something in him ready to respond to something in them; and in spite of his resentment of some of the Cliftonian ideals, the fact remains that the bulk of his published letters were written in the perfect assurance of sympathy to men who were or had been his colleagues at Clifton.

A big school is a great community; it can only do its work well when the separate components of that community are of various sorts, sizes, strengths, and even weaknesses. He would be a rash man who would essay to prescribe the point at which Brown's

influence ended at Clifton; directly or indirectly he touched every man there, possibly every boy. He might appear to trifle at masters' meetings, deliberately to drench in cold water aspirations that seemed magnificent; but a school cannot be given over entirely to the men who merely elaborate a routine, however good that routine. Life to be healthy must be something more than a conscientious discharge of prescribed duties; it is better that men should occasionally kick with the extravagance of a *cancan*, than that they should invariably tread in measured pace the decent harmonious round. Though perhaps innocent of any such intention, Brown kept Clifton sweet, kept pouring into her the greater light of the artistic life, the antidote to that horrible conception of a school, so dear to some parents and governing bodies, as a place where useful information is dealt out by the hour and where learning has no home.

Of Brown's minor indiscretions there has survived in the memories of Clifton men a speech made in proposing the health of the Council at a public dinner, which used for many years to be held at the end of each summer term. The Council, the masters, the sixth form, and the friends of the school attended this decorous festivity, so naturally it was an occasion for the profuse distribution of rhetorical butter; on this particular occasion Clifton happening to have reached her zenith, having won countless scholarships and demonstrated her cricket to be on a level with that of older schools, there was a perfect orgy of self-congratulation. Dr. Percival, dwelling on the successes of which he was justifiably proud, had paid well-earned compliments to the sixth form; they, he said, were the backbone of the school. This phrase unhappily tickled the fancy

of the Councillors; each as he took up his parable adverted to it, till they worried the poor thing beyond its natural death. In due course it fell upon Brown as senior assistant master to propose the health of the Council. Unfortunately remembering Menenius Agrippa, he took a new departure, and scornfully flinging over his shoulder the remnants of the backbone, he compared the Council to,—well, to a more central region of the school's anatomy, and proceeded, in almost Rabelaisian detail, to comment on its useful functions. It was all done in good part, but by a mysterious operation of nature's laws Councils of all kinds are impervious to humour; here and there a councillor, whether of a school or a town or a county, may be capable of a smile or even a chuckle, but the great laughter of the early gods is beyond them; it terrifies their righteous souls, scatters consternation through their solemn ranks, as though a worthy housewife, listening for the postman's knock, should suddenly be saluted with a clap of thunder.

That greater laughter was in Brown's whole being; but it was dangerous to scratch him. Scratch your Russian and you are certain of your Tartar, but there was no such certainty in scratching Brown. He might bear down upon you in full canonicals, bewigged, rustling in silken cassock, a full-blown parson of the eighteenth century, or he might advance threatening, birch in hand, a Busby; boys who scratched him invariably found the Busby.

In 1892 Brown retired from Clifton and settled in the Isle of Man, his native country, the Eden of his dreams; from this refuge the better part of his correspondence was dated. His wife had died four years before he left Clifton.

I try to force my poor nervous spirit to take this limitation. But oh, how

hard! I try to live and think and feel just *de die in diem*. I try to fence in for each day a sort of cofferdam of exclusion; but the past comes from great depths which are uncontrollable by any engineering of mine, and the future spreads its enormous vacuum . . . one thing emerges—my absolute belief in immortality. . . . Now I feel my body to be nothing but an integument and the inveteracy of the material association to be a tie little more than momentary and quite carnal. Death is the key to another room, and it is the very next room.

Yes, there was more in Brown than the great laughter; there was also the great capacity for tears. No whining, puling, whimpering wail was his, but the honest outpouring of a strong hearty man. With the different aspects of sorrow his sympathy was no less fine, delicate, intuitive, and true, than with all that is mirthful. How did he, a man, come to surmise, to feel along with all else even the physical distress of a mother who has lost her child? That he did so stands recorded in a short poem, *MATER DOLOROSA*, written in dialect, as such things must be; the poor ignorant material-minded loving woman clutches at your throat; you choke, you sob, your tears are mingled with hers. Strange that he whose literary ambition was to have written just one story, "the shortest possible, a mere page or two," which should thus capture and annihilate his reader, was unaware that he had done the thing in verse!

The Manx dialect, so easily interpreted, is still a stumbling-block to many who might otherwise enjoy Brown's poems; and there is a tendency to relegate him to that limbo of the not quite literary men among whose ranks stands (if dialect fixes the line) the illustrious figure of Burns; and yet who would give TAM O'SHANTER for all that Burns wrote to please the Edinburgh drawing-rooms? The use and abuse

of dialect is, however, too big a question to be dealt with here. There remains Brown's intense local patriotism; every inch of his native island was sacred to him; he knew it from end to end, every hill, every glen, Port Erin and its cliffs, the Curragh and its flowery winding paths, and black bogs lit up by that perfect flower, the bog-bean: the whole in his eyes was beautiful. And so it was with the people; nobody understood their weaknesses better, or exposed them more frankly, but for all this he loved them passionately, and they him. But this capacity of affection for a little corner of the earth and its inhabitants was after all only a symptom in Brown; had he been born elsewhere, had Jedburgh claimed him her son, or Exmoor, or some rich English county of the Midland region, gracious with trees, spreading its spacious meadows to a kindly wind, the result would have been the same; he would have known every path, every stile, every nook where flowers are to be found, every streamlet, every pool and the innermost lives of all the men and women within his reach; of all, not only of the poor and humble, but of the rich, possibly even of that most inaccessible, most intractable middle-class. There was no room in Brown for Thackeray's hatred of the snob, for Flaubert's physical dread of the *bourgeois*; in all he found something to love and admire, in all, too, something to laugh at and with. It was not because he was a Manxman, but because he was a complete man, that he could write as follows in describing an entertainment given by Mr. and Mrs. Hall Caine to some elderly islanders.

The songs opened with ROCK OF AGES. This was rather stiff; but the leader was a Gorry, a beautiful descendant of the

Vikings, whose face was lighted up with a perfectly divine illumination of piety and tenderness, and all the men and women sang with him. The poor old things could not get over the idea that it was a religious service, could not suddenly disuse their methodical traditions and habits. Several hymns followed, and it was not without a kind of shock that we found ourselves at last involved in the frank nonsense of HUNT THE WREN! . . . The old chaps, distrusting their power of entertainment, had imported into the gathering a very "young chap," one K. (but all, young and old, are K.'s). He was dressed to the nines, played the fiddle, and sang music-hall horrors, dallying with a cigar (!) which he smoked nonchalantly as he sang.

To see the old people under this ribald treatment! ROCK OF AGES! what a *bouleversement*! They evidently thought it would be ungracious to appear otherwise than pleased. So they twisted their dear old facial muscles into the most complicated skeins of quasi-apprehension, and "waited for the day" of a proper recovery.

The next hymn they sang, JESUS, LOVER OF MY SOUL, they *did* sing. A gentle protest, but a most heart-felt burst of religious fervour; a very ecstasy. Do you wonder if I trembled, and my eyes filled with tears?

K. was all unconscious. K. fell back and resumed his fiddle with a fine alertness which did him credit,—never turned a hair. But afterwards, C. (an old sailor, who had taken the chair) apologised to me privately. "A young man, you see. Of course there must be all sorts, and we thought that a little . . . well, it's not the thing, no no! but still, for all . . ." and so forth. That kind, sagacious, equitable old C.

In another part of this letter, speaking of the speech in which this same C. proposed the health of the host and hostess, Brown, who describes it as an absolutely perfect speech further says:

C. tore away, broke Priscian's head a thousand times into a thousand pieces, assaulted the Nine with untamed audacity, and through rape, fire, and murder strode on, a very storm of splendid anacoluthon, and devil-take-the-hindmost.

Brown would have found C. or his analogue everywhere, even in less promising localities than the Isle of Man, and he has been made to pay too dearly for his attachment to his native country and its language; men have learned to think of him as "some struggling local poet," and tacitly exclude him from the ranks of full-blown literary men. Readers of Brown's letters will have the opportunity of correcting this unfortunate mistake, and reap their reward in so doing. They will learn, for instance, how he studied Petrarch, not in order to learn Italian, but to put himself in the position of Petrarch's contemporaries to whom Petrarch was a power, to see him as they saw him. Similarly he delighted in the great Fathers of the English Church; he did not read them for their doctrines, but for their form, their style, to get behind their minds and feelings; he even took pleasure in eighteenth century Latin, in the commentaries of great scholars: "It's the most glorious fun to watch the smart cut and thrust of these old boys, and hear them hurl their *putidissimus ille fungus* at one another's heads." But he was not a critical reader in one sense of the phrase; he did not weigh and balance minutely; he urged his friends to "soak" in any particular literature, to get themselves saturated with it, if they were to achieve the highest enjoyment; not that he was incapable of minute criticism; he could put his finger with unflinching touch on the exact word or turn in a sentence which gave it force. Before all things he was a literary catholic; he could show his appreciation in the same letter of Guy de Maupassant and Bishop Heber.

His claims for himself were modest; here they are:

Your idea of forcing or fostering the sale of my little books is most amusing. But it shows the kindness of your heart.

It is odd, but,—do you know?—I have a perfectly serene confidence in their future. How it will come to pass I am not prepared to say, nor does it much matter. A child, perhaps yet unborn, will do it. A great poet is yet to be, a Manx poet, transcending all our "small doings." He will be called Kewish, Shimmin, Quayle, Cottier. All right! He will stumble across my *old ditties*, he will love them, he will muse, the fire will be kindled, and at the last he will speak with his tongue. And he will say—"This man was my brother, my father, my own real self." Through Kewish I shall find utterance, through Shimmin, through Quayle, through Cottier. Even so my heart goes stretching back to some possible progenitor whom I'd give worlds to find. I cannot find him; but I shall be found, though after many days,—found of Cottier, Quayle, Shimmin, Kewish. You'll see! Ah no, you'll not. Dear friend, you and I will be far away. At any rate, under the sweet Manx sod we knew and cherished we shall sleep the last sleep. And Kewish will be the *booe* (boy). He will be the poet of the twentieth century. How he will yearn towards us! He will handle loftier themes, and broader branches will issue from his stem; but his roots will be in our ashes, in the bed of dialectic homeliness which we have laid. There now! And I shall be perfectly satisfied, feeding the young native genius with racy sap sending up the blossoms to bloom in Manx air, and make all Manx men and women happy. Kewish will, I doubt not, give readings of our booklets, just to give the people a notion of what this old stuff was like. Kewish will shed the tear of sympathetic divination. Leave it to Kewish! A "gran" chap—Kewish!

Any account of Brown would be incomplete without a reference to his passion for what is compendiously called Nature. This is a region in which the well-advised tread with caution; for, to be quite candid, we are rather over done with Nature nowadays; lakes and mountains and sunsets and birds and plants and the whole Wordsworthian and

Ruskinian paraphernalia are shed upon us somewhat mercilessly; many pages of modern books read like a scene-painter's directions or a market-gardener's catalogue. Brown's love of Nature,—the phrase is inevitable—was something different from all this; he was not so much an observer, as an enthusiast, nay a real passionate lover; there was something mystic in his attachment, and it was all the more attractive, because of its reserves; he did not open readily this inmost shrine of his heart; there was a certain pudibundity about him, the chaste awe of the virgin lover.

He read a certain humanity into natural things, feeling for them as though actually living and sentient. The Jungfrau, when the sunset glow had gone, appalled him as being dead, and he rejoiced to note her recovery under the moonlight; mountain streams were always to him "little scamps" playing mischievous merry pranks among the hills, and he was genuinely sorry for the untimely fate of a rill in Ireland, which, rising in a tarn on the top of a headland, only lived to tumble abruptly over a cliff into the sea; there was pathos to him in this short career. The scents in the glens, or still more flowery curraghs, seemed to stir some deeper emotion in him than the mere sense of smell; it was as though the elemental forces entered into him, and he became one of them; his mood became mysteriously communi-

cated to his companion, who would not have been amazed had birds suddenly come to flutter around his head, or the "small deer" of the island crowded round his feet, had the trees bowed, had the rocks moved out of his path, had he burst out into some wild melody, had he strode on among his subjects, a conquering but unconscious Orpheus.

There is an old, old story known to Christian men as well as to Pagans long ago. It tells us how a ship was sailing past the Echinades, and in the stillness of a calm a voice was heard calling for one Thamus, an Egyptian passenger on board. Thamus was at first frightened, but at last responded; and thereupon the voice bid him announce at a certain headland hard by that Great Pan was dead; and when he had done so, from all the shore broke out a mighty wailing, and ran along the filmy cliffs, and was carried far up into the hills. When this loving son of the little island suddenly fell stricken at Clifton to breathe out his glorious soul in a few painless moments, did no message reach his native land? Did no traveller on that October night hear above the beating of the paddles that carried him to Ireland, a cry of sorrow in the impending cliffs of Man, a universal lamentation rising from her hills? Had one claimed to have done so there would have been those not unwilling to believe his tale.

J. C. TARVER.



## SOME ASPECTS OF THE CHINAMAN.

THE horror of the reported massacre at Pekin is yet fresh in men's minds, and though the report, like so many others emanating from the Far East, was untrue, and though the subsequent course of events has proved happier than could reasonably have been anticipated in the circumstances, yet for five long weeks Europe went through the unique experience of being unable to obtain news from its representatives, beleaguered in an Asiatic city only sixty miles from a port in which European men-of-war were riding at anchor.

One thing is clear, and that is that the Chinese question has come upon us at last with a vengeance. Having baffled the trained diplomatists who for years have represented Europe in their midst, the Chinese, whether representing their country as a whole or not, at least representing a formidable fighting force of thousands of well-armed men with quick-firing guns, have shown a clear intention of driving Europe out of China; and Europe, in its impotence, has had to call upon Japan to save it from being driven headlong into the sea.

In these circumstances it may be found interesting to consider certain conditions under which large masses of men of Chinese race are settled as colonists under the English crown within ten days' sail of Hong Kong itself.

A story is told by a high official that, while on leave in England, he once mentioned in the hunting-field that he had just returned from the Straits Settlements, when a man near him remarked, in the intervals of

lighting a cigar, "Ah, that's somewhere in South America, is it not?"

Although the belief that the Straits Settlements are somewhere in South America is probably not very general, yet there is a certain vagueness in many minds as to what constitutes the Straits and as to its exact whereabouts, although Penang and Singapore are familiar names to every traveller to the Far East. The Chinese have for very many years migrated south from Hong Kong and Canton in large numbers and settled in Singapore and Penang, and in lesser numbers in Malacca. In Singapore, the possession of which island, whose fine harbour is the port of call for the whole of the Far East, we owe to the genius and foresight of Sir Stamford Raffles, the population is overwhelmingly Chinese. The population of the Straits Settlements is given as slightly over half a million; the exact numbers of each nationality are not given, but the Malay population, with other natives from India, Ceylon, and Sumatra, will hardly exceed one hundred and fifty thousand; Europeans in the Straits are counted by hundreds only, and we shall hardly be far wrong in placing the Chinese population, Straits-born and pure Chinese together, at three hundred and fifty thousand. Every street in Penang and Singapore swarms with Chinamen. His *jinricksha*, that glorified perambulator with spider-wheels, convenient hood, and an athletic Chinese runner between the long slender shafts, is far the most convenient vehicle plying for hire. His country-

men meet one at every turn ; one sees them jogging along on their way to market with great baskets full of fruit and vegetables, or swarming along the walls of unfinished houses like ants upon an ant-heap, adjusting beams or hammering on the shingles, or wooden tiles, of the hard wooden roof. The harbours are full of Chinese *tong-kongs*, rough heavy boats, rudely jostling one another as they push alongside the steamers and ply for custom. In the business-quarters on shore whole streets are formed by Chinese shops, where may be seen the sleek shop-keepers and merchants clad in flowing robes and counting gains and losses. It may be remarked in passing that Chinese merchants are well thought of by English men of business, for though slow to strike a bargain, when they do so they keep it. Their word is as good as their bond ; but the same, it is said, cannot always be predicated of the Japanese. Chinese men of business bid fair to monopolise much of the trade of the Straits Settlements, and the wealth and importance of the Chinese element there has been a source of anxiety to us more than once. For the wealthy Chinaman is a very splendid and a very arrogant person, even in a British colony. He spends his money very much as our rich men do ; he loves good horses, and fine houses, and gardens well laid out, and brave apparel, and an army of servants ; he is charitable and benevolent ; he will, on occasion, entertain you with a princely hospitality. Yet deep down in the heart of your smiling and courteous host (for nobody can be more exquisitely polite than your Chinaman) lies ever the unspoken thought : *foreign devil*.

There were riots and troubles in the Straits a few years ago over some Chinese questions ; our troops at Sin-

gapore were kept under arms, but the weak governor of the day did not permit them to act, and it is no exaggeration to say that for some three days the lower portion of Singapore was practically in the hands of Chinese rioters. In Penang serious apprehensions were felt for the safety of the European population, with many ladies and children, living for the most part in isolated villas scattered along outlying roads which the slender military and police garrison were quite inadequate to guard. The danger passed, but in the opinion of many well qualified to judge it left our prestige irretrievably damaged. The horrors of recent events in China Proper recall those days of apprehension.

It was the discovery of rich tin-mines on the main land of the Malay Peninsula, on the edges of which the islands of Penang and Singapore, vastly important as they are to us, lie as mere specks upon the map, which led to the first influx of Chinese immigrants to the Native States of Perak, Selangor, Pahang, and Sungei Ujong, some twenty-five years ago. These Malay States, sparsely inhabited by an amiable and indolent race, mere jungle-places, to use the Malay phrase, were till then undeveloped and practically unknown. The influx of pork-eating barbarians who threatened to overwhelm their country by mere force of numbers was bitterly resented by the proud Mahomedan inhabitants : the conflict of races gave rise to what is known as the Perak War ; and Perak was only embarked on its career of prosperity, as pioneer of the new order of things, through the tact and administrative genius of Sir Hugh Low. The other Protected Native States, Crown colonies in everything but name, have not been slow to follow in its wake.

The extension of the railway-system

all over the Malay Peninsula has for many years been pushed on with great energy and determination, and the fact that in both Perak and Selangor, the richest and most enterprising of these States, the current expenditure exceeds the revenue by a million dollars is probably due entirely to this circumstance. An English loan of half a million sterling for railway-extension in the Peninsula has been negotiated.

Taking the Chinese population on the mainland as being not less than four hundred thousand, and regarding the Native States and the Straits Settlements as being (as in fact they are,) commercially and geographically one, we find here an area of land, among the richest and most fertile in the world, over twenty-five thousand square miles in extent, producing an annual revenue of over fifteen million dollars, with a population of over one million, of which some seven hundred and fifty thousand are Chinese and Straits-born Chinese. We see that the vast problem now arising from the imbroglio at Peking, and engaging (some say baffling) the combined wisdom of Europe, has yet another phase which touches England very nearly, because exclusively, and to which she may do well to give some attention.

But to turn to the more personal aspects of the Chinaman as I knew him during six years of work in his midst in the State of Perak, for which Chinese enterprise has done so much. In any one of the numerous tin-mines may be seen swarms of Chinese coolies running along the swaying planks which serve as a pathway from the top of the mine down to the tin-sand stratum. All of them are busy as bees, some of them with empty baskets on their return journey, others with their long bearing-sticks weighted down at each end by the

heavy basket full of grey, uninteresting sand. As they struggle along up the swaying planks, the strong bamboo resting slantwise over the right shoulder, bending and straining beneath the double force of weight and motion, their loins girt with a pair of short loose cotton drawers, the long pigtail tightly curled round the clean-shaven head, their broad backs and sturdy shoulders bare and streaming with perspiration, they offer a striking picture of manly strength and endurance. It is a leading characteristic of their race, and both America and Australia have been well advised in taking steps to exclude so formidable a competitor from their labour-markets. Where he is once admitted he swarms into every path and by-way of labour, underselling and pushing aside every rival, covering the land with his shops and his temples, his clubhouses and his burying-places, ever active, ever present, as shopkeeper, market-gardener, carpenter, bootmaker, cook, valet, builder, or general contractor.

Englishmen in the Malay Peninsula, with many nationalities to choose from, prefer Chinese servants as a rule. If they do not wait at table with the elegance of an English parlourmaid, they at least know their work and do it well enough in their own way. They are clean, honest, and give little trouble. An occasional request for a small advance on their wages to buy new clothes at Chinese New Year, as every self-respecting Chinaman does, or to send to the old father in China, is about the limit of their demands on one's good-nature. They are by no means bad cooks, and learn readily. A Chinese cook who has had an English training is usually worth two or three dollars a month extra; the probabilities are that he is very good indeed.

No Chinese servant displays, as a

rule, any great feeling of personal attachment to his master. It is not in the blood to show much feeling of any kind; they are phlegmatic, alike in pleasure and in pain. A friend of mine had an English fox-terrier which his Chinese boy took care of. The boy seemed attached to the dog, and was full of solicitude if it chanced to fall ill. One day the poor little beast fell out of a boat and was drowned, and his master returned without him. From that moment the boy never mentioned the dog; he did not ask what had become of it or refer to it in any way: there was no more dog,—that was all. There is, indeed, a curious mixture of good feeling and of apathy to others' misfortunes which makes the Chinaman rather more puzzling than other natives of the inscrutable East. A Chinese coolie will take a way-worn traveller of his own race into his hut and give him food and shelter for the night; if the stranger be of his own *seh*, or surname, he will treat him almost as a brother. Yet if the wayfarer chance, on setting out next morning, to get knocked down, or meet with some other accident, it will probably strike his host of overnight as very comical indeed. No body of men hang more closely together than Chinese coolies working in the same mine; but a great shout of laughter from the mine is an almost certain signal that one of them has in some way or other come to trouble. Yet that there is much that is kindly, even tender-hearted, about the Chinaman, nobody who has seen much of him, or noted his great fondness for children, can doubt for a moment. In their own quiet way Chinese servants show personal attachment to their masters if the latter treat them well, and a friend of mine told me that he owed his life to the devotion with which his Chinese boy

nursed him day and night through a serious illness. When I was leaving the East my own boy seemed sorry, and I know that I was sorry to say good-bye to him.

During two years as police-magistrate at Taiping, the capital of Perak, among a population almost purely Chinese, I heard thousands of cases, great and small, criminal and civil, and saw the Chinese in many aspects. The court-staff, composed largely of educated Chinamen, was carefully selected and well paid, and was thoroughly to be trusted. The chief Chinese interpreter was a Cantonese of good standing and a wonderfully expert linguist; he spoke English well, and was a master of several Chinese dialects, as we call them, though in reality they are different languages. A Chinaman from the north endeavouring to carry on a conversation with a Chinaman from the south has about as much chance of being understood as a Russian addressing an Italian. That the constant interpretation and counter-interpretation thus involved renders the hearing of Chinese cases, and the attempt to disentangle the truth, very irksome and difficult speaks for itself. Nobody but those who have sat for hours taking down evidence through interpreters know how wearisome it is. Besides, in all Chinese cases, as with other Orientals, lying is freely indulged in. The side which lies most skilfully wins the case; that is the Oriental way of looking at it.

On one occasion I remember a witness setting up a highly ingenious story in defence of the prisoner, which might well have got him off had the two worthies concerted the line of defence together. Unfortunately, the prisoner (the witnesses being kept outside the court) had told his tale differently. "But," I said, turning to the witness, "your friend the

prisoner says so-and-so." "Oh, I didn't know that!" said the witness abruptly, and with a sweet smile he hurriedly left the box. This was like another Chinese gentleman whom I came across on my way to England, one of a band of immigrants from Hong Kong landing at Vancouver, whom in the confusion of landing I saw walking off with my hat-box. "My friend," said I, "that is my hat-box." "No, no," he rejoined, "this piecee my piecee, this piecee my belong." I pointed out the circumstance that my name was painted across the box, which he then handed to me with great dignity. "More better," he remarked, "more better you takee!" I agreed with him, and we parted with smiles of mutual esteem.

A common crime among the Chinese, as among Orientals generally, is petty theft. Except in cases of habitual thieving, it is not treated very seriously, and it occasionally gives rise to an amusing defence, as when a Chinaman, charged with stealing a chicken, gravely informed me that he had taken it up because he saw it had its feet in a puddle and he felt very sorry for the poor little chicken. Burglary and robbery with violence, and what is known to the Indian Penal Code as gang-robbery (where seven men and upwards join together to commit robbery with violence), are the worst of the more common offences and are severely dealt with. When a Chinaman is violent he is very violent, and in the above class of cases, and in those concerned with secret societies, the victims are usually terribly cut about. It is no unusual event for an English magistrate to be hastily summoned to the hospital to visit some such victim and to take his dying deposition. He finds the poor wretch covered with wounds that would be fatal to nine Englishmen

out of ten, back and chest one mass of gaping stabs and slashes. The man's usual story is that he was suddenly attacked at the corner of a street and his assailants made off. And then appears one of the Chinaman's peculiar characteristics; nothing will persuade him to say that he believes he is going to die. He will acknowledge that he knows he is very seriously hurt, but that he is going to die,—no! Thus, in nine cases out of ten, all one can do is to take down his statement of what occurred; a dying deposition, in the legal sense of the term, it is quite impossible to get out of him. Sometimes he justifies his obstinacy by making a marvellous recovery. Yet the Chinese commit suicide on very slight grounds,—some passing trouble or mental depression will suffice.

Crimes due to Chinese secret societies were in Perak punished with severity under a special statute. We see in the present state of affairs in China what these societies, whether called Boxers or by any other fancy name, can accomplish in the way of disorder and rapine if well financed, influentially backed, and given a fairly free hand.

Some years ago Kinta, the great mining district of Perak, was threatened with serious disturbances calculated to ruin the mining industry. Sir Hugh Low, the strong and able administrator of those days, rode over, and, calling together the headmen of the two hostile factions that were flying at each others' throats, addressed them in language calculated to appeal alike to their fears and to their common-sense. This action, combined with vigorous measures already adopted by the magistrate in charge of the district, brought the rioters to their senses. The whole business,—for the Kinta riots were very serious indeed—showed how easily the Chinese

can be managed with common-sense and a firm hand, as compared with the vacillating policy such as obtained in the neighbouring colony, and which is an absolutely fatal one to adopt.

There is one quality about the Chinaman which is very valuable,—his sense of justice. Not getting much of it in his own country, he seems to keenly appreciate it when he finds it elsewhere. It gives us a wonderful hold over these men of the strange alien race whose spoken language only a few tens of Englishmen understand, whose written language only a European scholar here and there can decipher. I have seen a body of mining coolies rush into my court with an uproar as if a mutiny had broken out. From the noise they made one might imagine they intended to slay magistrate, interpreters, clerks, and bailiffs there and then; yet after a few words through the Chinese interpreter there ensued a lovely calm. It appeared that they suspected their headman of keeping back their wages, and as it was getting near Chinese New Year, when not only are new clothes required, but old debts are cancelled, they were becoming very nervous. They were told that the matter would be enquired into, and the necessary steps taken to safeguard their interests; and they left the court smiling, and with many cries of "*Ho lok, ho lok* (it is well, it is well)!"

Quarrels between gangs of mining coolies working on adjoining mines are very frequent, the cause of dispute being the question of water-rights. One gang finds another gang diverting its surface-water for sluicing-purposes; the other gang claims that the stream belongs to its mine, and in a moment the most furious faction-fight ensues, the sharp-edged bamboo carrying-sticks coming down with dire effect on the smooth-shaven crowns

of the combatants. The police rush upon the scene of contest, and next morning the magistrate has to adjudicate between the long lines of wounded warriors according to the apparent merits of the case. The usual course is to hold the headmen responsible, and to inflict fines upon them varying with the numbers of the combatants on each side and the general circumstances of the case; the headmen then recover the fines from their coolies. It is a rough-and-ready method, but it meets the case. Now and then the cause of dispute lies deeper, and I remember one case in which an over-zealous police-inspector had really got the aggrieved parties as prisoners in the dock. Something in their general demeanour, which was restless and far more talkative and noisy than is usual, struck me. In the end I decided to let them go, and gave the prosecuting side a word of warning. As I drove home I pondered a good deal over the affair, which seemed rather a complicated one and worried me; and in the course of the evening I heard that, had the decision been given the other way, there would certainly have been murder in the mines before the day was out!

Speaking generally, it may be pretty safely stated that the Chinaman as we know him in the Native States was a very good fellow. Whether it was the rich, successful mining capitalist or the simple charcoal-burner in his lonely hut beside the forest, there was always something about them that made one feel that they were not so different from ourselves as other Orientals are. I have been to dinners at the Cantonese Club in honour of some high English official, and our Chinese hosts certainly managed things uncommonly well; I have pulled up, hot and thirsty, outside a Chinese hut, and



asked in broken Chinese for a cup of tea, and the humble inmates quickly brought me out that refreshing drink (so far superior to ours) with many smiles and friendly nods. They were very poor, but they would have been greatly hurt had I offered to pay for what they gave me.

In their hospitality, their charity, their general common-sense and capacity for business, the Chinese have many points that offer common ground for a basis of sympathy. Nobody who has worked among them can be blind to other aspects that are less admirable; there is good reason, too, to believe that in his heart of hearts every Chinaman, rich or poor, regards the Englishman as a *foreign devil*—perhaps as a foreign devil with some good and useful qualities, but still a foreign devil. Therefore we must always have the upper hand in dealing with the Chinaman. In Perak we had no missionaries, and, true to our policy all over the East, we left his religion alone. How much his religion does enter into the Chinaman's life the following little anecdote will show. I had secured the services of the chief Chinese interpreter to teach me a little Cantonese. He used to come to my bungalow early every morning; but one day came instead a little note from him, asking me to excuse him as it was the birthday of the goddess So-and-so, and he was due to worship at her shrine. Here was a well-born, highly-educated Chinaman, speaking English admirably, a well-informed and enlightened man, but firmly adhering in every detail to the religion of his ancestors. It is not difficult to imagine the infinite mischief that has been wrought in China Proper by telling not only men of his class, but the fanatical narrow-minded officials at the top of the social ladder, and the seething millions, the ignorant superstitious

masses who believe anything and everything that those above them wish them to believe, that their religion is all wrong, and that they must adopt ours. No wonder that at the present moment all China is ablaze from one end to another.

When the day comes to exact reparation for the outrages at Peking, and we can see with some measure of clearness whither tends the whole chaotic conflict of dynasties, peoples, races, and languages, it may check a tendency to undue vituperation of the Chinaman if we try a little to distinguish between Chinese and Chinese, remembering that among China's many millions the great bulk have probably entered on the present conflict through blind hatred inflamed by unscrupulous lies, and by hideous stories of Christian malpractices; and that many thousands of the pick of China's cool-headed sons probably regret deeply the present state of affairs, though of themselves alone they are powerless to remedy it. The great merchants of Canton have recently manifested alarm. A walk through that vast city will, perhaps, bring home the cause of it more readily than much writing. We notice the swarming streets, the rich shops, the mandarins' courts crowded with idle rascals, the prisons with their wretched inmates, the temples with their courtyards filled with cut-throats; the vastness, the wealth, the viciousness, the squalor of it all. Let loose the fiends of murder and rapine, and who shall save the rest?

It is one thing to reflect upon the nature of the Chinese seen under circumstances favourable to ourselves, in a part of the world where we are the rulers and they the ruled. In speaking and writing of the problems now before us in China Proper, Englishmen are somewhat apt to forget that the reverse is the case. An

Englishman, even with a good guide, does not walk through Canton entirely without risk. Outside the treaty ports we are the guests of the nation if we travel in China. We seem apt to overlook this. At any rate we have become involved, through our missionaries, in what every Chinaman believes is an onslaught on his religion. The Chinese do not separate religion and politics: "First the missionary, then the consul, then the general," is the pithy Chinese proverb. If we could only leave their religion alone the whole aspect and nature of the problem before us would be changed. It is not a bad religion, and it suits them; of this, at least, we may rest assured, that not more than one in a thousand of what we fondly call Christian converts is other than a damaged article, neither fish, flesh, fowl, nor good red-herring. But the failure of Europe to grasp the Chinese question is written large in every news-sheet. We have stirred and prodded at the sleeping giant, loose-limbed, indeed, but full of latent strength, till he has become annoyed, alarmed, and very angry. He is now demonstrating to an astonished world that, having money, he has secretly purchased quick-firing guns and hired foreign officers to teach him how to

use them. He objects to any further operations of the nature of his own "punishment of the thousand cuts." He intended to drive the Russians from Port Arthur, the Germans from Kiau-chau, the English from Wei-hai-wei. "China for the Chinese and death to all Christians," is the battle-cry that has been rousing the mighty empire from one end to another. Great questions will arise before everything is over. Whatever retribution is exacted, it may be as well for us to accustom our minds to realise the right of four hundred millions of people, with a civilisation infinitely older than our own, to live, to some extent, in the manner to which they are accustomed.

Let us try to grasp the fact that it is the lettered and unscrupulous governing class that is the sworn foe of all change and all progress, that men like Gordon have done much with the frugal, industrious, thrifty, patient Chinaman of the masses. But to unsettle him by attacking his religion is sheer madness; it is no better than walking with a lighted candle into a magazine of gunpowder. The result has been the recent explosion of race-hatred and fanatical blood-thirstiness, and the Silence of Peking.

F. THOROLD DICKSON.

## MARIKI.

## I.

I do not presume to declare that all that Mariki remembers is true; I would rather believe that it is not, that the passing of years and the credulousness of memory have raised a mist through which her childish terrors loom as giants devouring. But I do not know; and when I listen to her, and to others, I conceive a condition of things existing some fifty odd years ago, in remote corners of the country, that is almost incredible and wholly amazing. The curtain lifts for an instant, and I seem to see behind it a life that, in some points at least, was strangely different from ours of to-day. It was less vicious indeed, but infinitely more brutal; brutality, so to speak, was a convention of existence.

At least I feel sure that Mariki has added nothing in malice; and indeed, when I listen to her, I do not find it difficult to believe that the most of her story is true, for, after all, it is not very wonderful. There are many who have suffered as much, some who have come through more; but to live through sixty years, full of constant labour and suffering and want, only to attain in the end to a poverty that is but just less clamant,—to live through sixty years with no joy in them save an unforgotten kindness, one kiss, and the bitter-sweet of child-bearing, and to be rewarded in the end by,—a *ciel de lit* and an evening-party! Truly, to us who look on, it seems a strange life that Mariki remembers.

Mariki left home when she was

seven years old, henceforward to make her own way in the world. She remembers the place, as we are all apt to do, with the details standing out against a background that she has forgotten. It lay in a hollow, neither very large nor very deep, ringed about with rising land that was not high enough for hills; there were few trees to break upon the crown of sky, which, in her memory, is always grey, but shining. The grass is greener than elsewhere, and the flowers in it more supremely beautiful; there are dim delights of nut-hedges and primrose-banks, and ditches where tadpoles are to be found. The village flashes into distinctness with its clay-walled houses and thatch of black buck-wheat straw; and a Holy Well, with a Virgin in its niche, harbours a primeval Bad Man in its depths. There is a squat grey church, with a circle of memories of its own; and very clearly she remembers a shop where sugar-sticks were sold at two for a halfpenny. But chiefly she insists on the scent of apples, rising strongly from the cider-mills, and the heaps of red and yellow fruit, a scent which, when it comes to her now, brings with it the illumined memory of home.

And Mariki left all this because since the stepmother had crossed the threshold, home had become unbearable. It was full of a continuous terror that to-day still turns her old face white and sets her placid lips a-tremble. She is not astonished in recalling it; stepmothers have a bad name in Brittany, and she

acknowledges the inevitable. "We were five girls, and she was bound to get rid of us," she says simply.

The eldest was old enough to be driven by hunger into evil, and Mariki has no forgiveness for her. "She could always have died, like the others," she says.

The second died of a decline, so it was said, her poor thin body so devoured by beatings and neglect that the neighbours refused to dress her for her coffin. "They rolled her in a sheet just as she was," Mariki explains, "and put her in, so; but if she is shamed by going naked on the Judgment Day, the *bon Dieu* will only have to look at her poor body to know that it was because she had a stepmother!"

Mariki herself was the third, a very small creature, worn even then, I imagine, to a premature elderliness. She was sickly, tattered, stunted with beating, but always with that persevering grasp on life that has brought her through sixty terrible years of it. One can picture her, a miniature woman in her long petticoat, apron, and plaited shawl, and the quaint high cap that she had to wash herself, with surely very strange results. She was so envious of the starched linens of her neighbours that, having neither starch nor any reasonable substitute, she would steal a stump of tallow candle; and when the battered and grimy cap was greased till it stood out stiff and grey and vilely smelling, Mariki held her head in the air. It did not matter that within the radius of some yards her theft discovered itself, and she was beaten for it; she would have been beaten in any case, for that or something else. "My back used to bleed at night when I lay down on the straw," she says, "for it was always bad; it got no time to heal."

Then there was Nannic. When

Nannic died the doctor came to look at her and sign the papers, and he shook his head and said it was just sickness. "But stepmother had taken care to pour her best brandy into him first," says Mariki, "and he shut his eyes so as not to see the bones coming through the skin. Everyone knew Nannic died of hunger." Once Mariki remembers seeing her tied to the leg of the great oak table, with her head just on its level, tied so that a piece of bread almost touched her cheek, while her arms were bound down to her side. She could not reach it; she could only look at it, with the water of desire dripping from her open mouth. She did not cry or call out, she only looked; and still she looked on in silence when her stepmother sat down in front of her and eat the bread herself. When she went away, Nannic (she was five years old) twisted round till she got her teeth upon the edge of the table, and tore away splinters till her mouth ran with blood.

There was still the baby, but this was a short tragedy. The stepmother went out for an hour's gossip, leaving the house carefully locked behind her, and Mariki set to do a man's work in digging the field. She also, it appears, left the baby crawling about the open hearth. When she had gone, Mariki sat down in the shade of the tall cabbages and sang to herself a little song that she still sings to-day. There is the sound of dancing *sabots* in it; there is also an infinite melancholy. And as she sat and sang she heard the baby cry within the house, and she was moved to climb up to the small window and look in. She could see nothing save the reflection of the firelight in the polished oak of the tall cupboard; it was flaming, and there was also smoke, and the baby gave up crying.

Mariki pressed her face sideways against the window, and saw a corner of the hearth and a scrap of the baby's frock, and an odd little light flickering along it. She ran so fast that her breath whistled as she gasped it in, to the cottage where her stepmother was. Something drummed in her ears all the way, "*she has the key, she has the key*;" and when she fell across the threshold of Jan the Smith, crying out the horror that drove her, the stepmother laughed. "That was another who was not dressed to go before the *bon Dieu*," says Mariki simply.

Very clearly she remembers the funeral, and her last day at home. All the village came, the women with their *coiffes* undone, and the men with their embroidered vests and broad felt hats; she herself had a new shawl and a cap of real muslin, for the first time in her life. She walked at the head of the women, beside the stepmother, and for once almost forgot her fear and hatred of her in admiration of her tears. She was, as Mariki confesses, a most beautiful mourner. But then, ahead, there was the tiny black box wrapped in a sheet and carried so easily in the crook of a man's arm; and Mariki had not forgotten, would never forget, the horror of the cruel little flame playing about the cotton frock. Also there had been Nannic, and before her Guéné; and now she, Mariki, was the last, and it would be her turn next.

Afterwards there was eating and drinking, and Mariki for once did not go hungry; the refuse was thrown to her, as she sat in the corner by the bread-chest and thought of great matters, for she was going to make her escape into the world that lay on the other side of the hills and which, for Mariki, was as large and as incomprehensible as eternity. All

creation lay, for her, in the hollow which was home, and she was going out into the unknown; resolute, shrinking, utterly frightened and amazingly brave, driven by the greater fear she left behind to face the terrors before her, she was going into the unknown.

She peered out from her refuge and took a last look at the room in which she had lived all her life and which, perhaps, she would never see again. There was her father, who had always been aimlessly, helplessly good to her; there was the stepmother, cheerful now that the convention of mourning had been observed, and surely triumphant, — Mariki fancied she was saying to herself, "Now there is only one more!"; there were all the faces she knew so well, many that would pity, none, not one, that would protect. Yonder, in the corner where she had been flung, Nannic had fallen to die; and about the hearth was a terrible memory of a flame and a little frock. From the great closed bed Mariki's mother had gone straight, they said, to be a saint in heaven; and on the shelf within it, where Guéné had died, Mariki now slept, so terribly near to the stepmother that she could touch her by stretching out a hand. And from night to night, to lie quaking for what might happen when her father slept and there was no one, no one else to know! In a cold sweat of terror she set herself to the lesser fear, and, hiding the crust that had been thrown her in a fold of her shawl, she crept out, furtive and timid, but moved by an infinite resolution. Who shall conceive the courage that upheld her, as she passed out under the very eyes of her stepmother, yet apparently unseen? "I think," Mariki says with conviction, "that the *bon Dieu* made me invisible, like His angels. For I

was not eleven years old yet, so I had committed no mortal sin, and perhaps He was sorry to see me beaten; how else would my step-mother have let me go with never a word?"

But once outside, alone with her resolve and the enormousness of escape, Mariki was only a little forlorn child, weeping in an agony of fear. As she tells me her story, she pauses when she comes to this; she is so sorry for the child she was that I ask no questions. And presently it was morning again, and she found herself in an unfamiliar road, begging for a lift in a passing cart, and rehearsing to herself in difficult French a little speech which she must have ready against need. "If you please, do you want a *femme de menage*?" She would stand on tip-toe when she said it, so as to look bigger.

## II.

Mariki remembers a very wonderful thing that happened once; someone was kind to her.

She had been taken on as cow-herd upon a small farm and was very proud of herself, for this was a rise in the world; but it was something of a drawback that she had nothing to cover her thin little body but a ragged chemise and a short jacket, and not even *sabots* on her bare feet. She could no longer venture to go to church on Sundays, even by seeking the darkest corner to hide in, and to stay away was a sin. Nor had she a halfpenny to buy anything with, or the likelihood of having one; she worked for her keep, or rather for that insufficiency which just kept her this side of starvation. So when she engaged herself this time, she plucked up courage to beg for the gift of an old petticoat.

"Nothing for nothing," said the *patronne* roughly. "Work for three months without your supper, and I'll give you a petticoat at the end of them."

To go without supper meant to have but one meal a day, and that dependent on the leavings of the labourers. Often there was nothing for Mariki but a crust of dry bread and the bottom of an empty bowl; but she agreed, nevertheless, for she was used to going hungry. Only when the time was ended, and the *patronne* declared she had not made up the worth of the petticoat and must go without supper for another month still, Mariki's patience, and her courage, gave way. She was half starved, half naked, and it was winter; she was only eleven years old and, for all her pride and independence, that day, as she herded her cows, she cried as if her heart would break. And just then (it sounds like a fairy-tale, but it is true), a little old woman, gathering dandelions along the banks, began to talk to her and ask her what was the matter. "Oh, *là, là, là, quel misère!*" she said, when she had heard it all. "If I were you, I would just go to Ma'ame Pimoriou down the road yonder and tell her about it. She's as good as an angel from heaven to poor little waifs like you; and I shouldn't wonder if she'd give you a petticoat straight away for the asking."

Who so happy as Mariki at the mere hope of it! How the cows, poor beasts, were driven home, painfully hobbling along with their heads fastened down to their right fore-feet, in a gallop that set them lowing in protest; how the work was done, or not done, so that Mariki could gallop off herself down the road that led to Ma'ame Pimoriou's little house—she remembers it all. And she remembers, too, how her excitement turned to



fury when one of the farm-men called out in derision that when she had outgrown "*ces sabots-là*" he would give her another pair. Now, Mariki was barefoot. She rushed at him like a vicious calf, her fists clenched in a frenzy of resentment. "And when you've worn off your skin with sitting," she screamed, "I'll give you a shirt!" "I was no better than a savage," she explains, blushing as she tells the story. "I'd lost the Breton, and I hadn't rightly learned French, and I didn't know how to speak decently. I'd been kicked about among the men and the pigs, and 'twas the pigs taught me least harm. And I was sore ashamed of my bare feet and legs. But when I got to Ma'ame Pimoriou's house, I behaved as polite as I knew how, and told her all about it; and she was so kind that I thought she was going to give me a petticoat straight away. But after all she only told me to come back on Thursday and bring the *patronne* with me."

So Mariki went home with her heart in her mouth, but not ready to give in. If she couldn't get the petticoat any other way, go with her the *patronne* must and should; but how to persuade her? She waited and watched and hung about, till she caught her in a fairly good humour after the supper which Mariki had to go without. "*Patronne*," she said very meekly, "Ma'ame Pimoriou asked me to go and see her on Thursday next, and would you please come too, she said?"

"Faith, not such a fool," grumbled the *patronne*. "No, my word! You've been telling her I give you no supper, little pig of a viper, and you imagine—"

"No, no, *patronne*," said Mariki imploringly. "I didn't tell her anything; indeed I didn't! (I had to get her to go," she puts in apologeti-

cally, "and then, for once, lying breaks no bones, as the saying is.) Indeed I said nothing at all," she repeated with conviction.

It took a great deal of persuasion, but Mariki succeeded. The *patronne* agreed to go, rather flattered in the depths of her heart by the invitation; for Ma'ame Pimoriou, though not rich, was the principal person of the village, and was loved by all for her gentleness and courtesy. The Breton, let me say in passing, venerates precisely those qualities which he practises least.

When they got to the house on the Thursday, Ma'ame Pimoriou was waiting for them and gave them chairs in front of her own. "She was in her beautiful black dress and silk shawl, with lace upon her head, and the *patronne* in her Sunday cap and great cloak, and me in my chemise and jacket and my bare legs a-dangling," says Mariki.

"And now I want to know if it's true, what I have heard," said Ma'ame Pimoriou, "—not from this poor little girl here, I assure you; she told me nothing—"

"Other people can tell lies as well as me," said Mariki to herself. "'Tis the *bon Dieu* that put it into her mouth, for sure."

"It was not from this little girl; but I hear that you have made her go without her food to pay for a petticoat to cover herself, and she half-naked. I am told that you have made her work for you on those terms for over three months. Now, is this true?"

The *patronne* was fairly taken aback, and confessed stammeringly that it was. "But I didn't do it of my own will," she whined; "it was my husband."

Ma'ame Pimoriou rose up, looking as angry as so kind a heart could do. "Nonsense!" she said. "Even if

that be true, you are mistress in your own house, and your man cannot force you to bring the curse of God on you and yours. How dare you go to church on Sundays when every day of the week you are starving and ill-treating a little child? I am not rich, as you know very well; but though this little one is not in my service I shall clothe her as you ought to have done, if you had a drop of Mary's milk in you. I shall clothe her, and in the future see you that you feed her." And then she turned to Mariki, with the kindness breaking out on her face like the sun through clouds, and told her to look at the two parcels that were lying ready for her. "Look at the week-day one first," she said smiling.

When Mariki tells the story, the tears run on to her cheeks and shine there, as she remembers. "For when I opened it," she says, "there was a chemise and a thick knitted vest and two petticoats, if you please, an upper and an under one,—for me who'd never had but one at a time in my life! Yes, and a jacket, and stockings, and a pair of *sabots* and a cap of real linen. I just looked at it all without saying a word, as stupid as if I'd been struck dumb. But that wasn't all. Ma'ame Pimoriou opened the other bundle and took something out of it. 'This is for Sundays,' she says. 'Now I dare say you haven't worn real shoes for a while!' 'Oh, oh, oh,' I cried, 'I've never had any in my life!' Then I felt as if I went weak all over. And then I looked and I looked, for besides the shoes there was another petticoat-piece of bright blue,—oh I can see it yet!—and stuff for a bodice, and an apron and shawl and a fine *coiffe*, just like everyone else,—and all for me!—was ever anyone so happy before?—all those beautiful warm things for me half naked! And then I heard her

saying that a woman in the village would make them up for me, and when they were ready I was to come back and let her see how I looked. I didn't thank her,—no, faith, I didn't thank her! I knew no better than to run off like a little mad creature straight to the sewing-woman, and I threw the bundle into her arms and told her I must have the things ready for next Sunday, I must, must, must,—and away I went laughing and crying both together, to kiss the step of the church-door, because with my bare legs I wasn't decent yet to go in."

Mariki pauses to cry a little, as children do, with smiles shining through tears. "It wasn't only the beautiful things," she adds; "it was the kindness. No one had ever been kind to me before."

When she went to Ma'ame Pimoriou in her new clothes, the old lady did not recognise her. "I could not have believed," she said, "that the dirty half-naked child would turn into such a trim little maiden. But I hope the dirt is not inside any longer either. My dear, won't you try and be clean inside and out, so that when you go before the *bon Dieu* you will be white enough not to shame the angels!"

"Since then," says Mariki simply, "I've always tried to keep myself clean."

### III.

Over the edge of the hill, on the road that looked down into the hollow, Mariki trudged once more. She was foot-sore and weary, and the keen wind blew cruelly through her worn clothes; the cold had seized on her till she was past shivering, and a growing numbness made it constantly more difficult to keep moving. She was so thin and small, stunted with overwork and ill-feeding, that the

wind, swinging boisterously over the hill, staggered her at every gust; though she bent herself, stooping, to face it, she could barely hold her own. The narrow shoulders were shrugged together and her breath came painfully in gasps; she limped in her *sabots*, and the skin about her lips and eyes was blue, as if with utter fatigue. But from the ring of her *sabots* on the ground to the lift of her little red nose into the air, there was not anywhere a suggestion of giving in. The half-frightened determination that had sustained her already through seven years of independence,—and who shall measure what they held of suffering and misery?—had brought her in mid-winter across half Brittany on foot, with only some crusts to eat by the way.

"I had money of my own by now," she is careful to add, "but then I wasn't going to spend it like that, to please my empty stomach. No, and I'd finished the bread I had brought with me, and beg I wouldn't, and it was further than I thought, and I was deadly cold! My feet were all broken from walking so far, and the hunger was like a wolf eating the life out of me, and I felt as if every minute I must fall down and sleep! You see, it was this way. I was in a place, and a real good place too, the best I'd had yet, with five *sous* a week of pay besides my keep, and almost always I'd enough to eat. Yes, and I'd even a bed all to myself in a box filled with straw in the wash-house. It was Mariki that was proud, I can tell you! The *patronne* was a good woman, if she was a bit rough with her hand, and she kept order in the house and out of it. I didn't get kicked and beaten for nothing there, no, scarcely ever; I was very well off."

At the end of a week, Mariki got her five *sous* and put them into a

box, the first money she'd ever had; "and every night after that I'd shake the box when I went to bed and then hide it under me in the straw. And when the box began to get heavy, I felt as rich as the Emperor at Paris himself.<sup>1</sup> I remember the first time I spent any of it, when I bought a handkerchief at the *pardon*, for ten *sous*. I didn't want it, not me; it was just for the pleasure of buying something for the first time in my life. I looked over all the handkerchiefs he had, and fingered them, and found fault with them as I'd seen other folks do; and then I went away, and came back to cheapen them, and at last I put down a *sou* at a time to make up the price, for I didn't like parting with them. When I'd got the handkerchief done up in a piece of paper and tied with a blue favour,—I would have my money's worth,—I went and looked at the *carrousel* and the lotteries and the *berlingot*-stall, and, if I hadn't been ashamed, I'd have gone and asked for my money back, and spent it over again. But when I was buying the handkerchief, I felt so grand and rich, and the man waiting on me as polite as if I'd been a real lady."

And then all of a sudden Mariki grew restless. She did not know what it was that came over her, but there was no getting away from it; all night long and every night, she dreamed of her father, and it was always the same dream; an old man, grown grey since she had seen him, seeking up and down the roads and crying for his girl, the lone last of his children. And all day there was a voice crying in her ears *Mariki*,

<sup>1</sup> With the Breton and Gallic peasants it is always the first Napoleon that is meant, and few realise that there was another; nor is he, perhaps, more than a name to conjure with to them.

Mariki, as if someone were calling to her from a great distance.

"At last one Sunday, when I went to mass, the Virgin in the chapel looked at me herself, and I heard her say *Go, go*; yes truly, I heard it as clear as I hear my own voice. It was no use talking about it; Mariki had got to go to her father, service or no service, and I was bound to lose that. But I didn't care; I didn't care about anything except seeing my father. And see him I would, even if he'd been beyond the beyond."

So she started. It sounds very simple; but, as a matter of fact, it meant walking some sixty miles in the heart of the winter. In places there was deep snow, and the wolves were out seeking for food; her road crossed two forests; she did not know her way, and scarcely remembered enough Breton to ask it,—'tis a language that forgets itself quickly, I am quaintly assured. And her provisions consisted of some bread and the chance of a drink by the way side; for she would not beg, and the money, the cherished money, that she had saved, was not for that.

When she got over the hillside out of the eye of the wind, she stood to recover her breath and look about her; and who should she see, coming towards her along the road, but her father himself!

"I don't know how I felt," she says. "I wanted to go and put my arms round his neck, and yet I was frightened. I couldn't walk up to him, and yet I couldn't run away; I just stood and waited to see what he would do. He had grown so gray and so thin, and he peered from side to side just as he did in my dream, as if he were looking for something, someone.

"'God keep you,' says he, pausing as he came near me and leaning on

his great stick. 'And you,' said I, in a queer voice that didn't seem like my own; it was as if someone spoke for me, for the words grew in my mouth without my calling them. 'You're maybe a stranger this way?' says he. 'Not quite that,' said I, 'though it's long since I've been here. And is that Ker-ez-Guen in the hollow, yonder?' I knew very well that it was, but the words came out in spite of me. 'Yes, it is,' said he; 'and I'm from there myself, so if it's there you have friends, I ought to know them.' He paused, and stared at me hard as if he was trying to remember me. 'Ah, but," said he, 'I don't know the childer, *les e'ffants*; I never look at them, if I can help it.' 'Certainly they are a great burden,' said the voice that came out of me, and me just trembling. 'Tis not that,' he said, very sad and quiet; 'but I've lost all mine. As to the dead, they are dead, and that's the *bon Dieu's* concern; but to lose them, and not to know whether they are still alive—there was a little one went away seven years ago, now—' 'Perhaps,' I whispered again, 'she will come back.' 'Oh, yes,' says he, 'she will come back. I hung the *bonne Vierge* in the thorn-tree at the Holy Well, and I begged her to go and find the little one for me, alive or dead, and bring her home; and I've burnt a candle every day in the chapel. The good Mother will certainly bring her home alive or dead; and if it's dead that she comes, well, I'm ready.<sup>1</sup> I stood there like a stone, and let him turn away without saying a word to stop him, his poor grey head looking from side to side,—for me. And then I just made a jump after him, and got somehow,—I don't know how—into his arms.

<sup>1</sup> The Breton believes that to see a *revenant*, or wraith of a dead person, is a certain sign that he himself will die shortly after.

'Father, the good Mother *has* brought Mariki home!' I said."

They went down into the valley presently, and as they came nearer to the village, the old man fell into increasing silences. At last he coughed behind his hand and looked sidelong at his daughter. "*She's* there, still," he said, apologetically; "*she's*,—*she's* not much changed. You aren't afraid of her, eh? You see, you're so small still, it's a pity,—and in any case, I'm afraid she won't let you stay for long."

Mariki laughed. Yes, she laughed, and her father started as if she had struck him, started, so that his hand fell from her shoulder, and he walked by her side shrunken away into himself and eyeing her almost with dismay. In that moment, I conceive, he realised that here was a Mariki who was grown a stranger to him. But she, as they drew near the cottage, forgot him, and forgot likewise her own fatigue. She straightened her bent shoulders and lifted her head; her feet lost their lameness, and she shook herself, as it were, into readiness for something that lay before her, upon which her mind was set; she seemed to prepare for a great pleasure, or, at the least, a profound satisfaction. At the kitchen-door she paused and looked about her; all was the same as when Guéné and Nannic had died there, and the baby; and she, Mariki, had been one of them, starved and beaten, and only just not dead as they were. But these memories, just now, were merged in the feeling, whatever it was, that uplifted her, and she turned from them almost impatiently to look at the hard-faced woman who eyed her with an angry astonishment from the hearth.

Mariki walked across to the only armchair by the fire, and seated herself, her legs dangling. Then, with

her hand thrust into the folds of her shawl, she looked her stepmother up and down with the contemptuous commiseration the poor give to the poorer. "I've come to see father," she said, in a drawl of ineffable superiority, "and of course you will put me up and feed me while I am here. The food must be good, mind; I dare say your best is not what I'm accustomed to nowadays, but I'm ready to make allowances; and I've no wish to come heavy on you, and you so poor."

She drew a purse from the folds of her shawl and jingled it with a large gesture of being used to riches. When she tells the story now, she jumps on her chair like a child, in the restless ecstasy of her enjoyment. "Stepmother just shrivelled up for all the world like an empty bladder," she says. In that moment, for all that had gone before, Mariki was revenged.

#### IV.

Twelve years later, on an autumn morning when the air was full of sweet October perfumes, Mariki went to her work. "The sky was as pink as a rose," she says, with her eyes far away; she, who scarcely notices whether the sun shines or the rain falls, has surprising endeavours of speech to recall the loveliness of a day that is thirty years gone by. She remembers it, with every detail illumined. "The grass was wet with dew, and the spider's webs upon the bushes were strung with little balls of it, like beads; and when a bit of green from the hedge touched my face, the drops of water ran down from it and hung on my lips. The cocks were crowing and the cows were calling to get out, and I could hear them ever so far off. It was shady yet,

and fresh, but the sun came up and filled the coolness, and all along the roads was the smell of ripe brambles and apples."

It was in the green country that lies on the further side of Dinan, and for Mariki, as for me, the memory of it is full of the scents and the sweetness of an October morning. "But there was never such another," she adds; "it was the most beautiful that ever was."

Perhaps it was; but Mariki was young then, whereas now she is old, and it was the morning of her wooing.

She went about her work in the little farm, where she did as much as a man for half his wages, thinking of nothing, certainly not of wooing or wedding; and for the matter of that she had long made up her mind that it was her fortune to die an old maid, and she had no time to regret it save when she chanced to hold a baby in her arms. "Then," she confesses, "yes, then,—to have had one of my own." But she was always too hard at work to think seriously of such things, and, perhaps, too much with men to greatly desire a nearer relation.

This morning she was certainly occupied with nothing of the kind, though she wondered, once or twice, whether the contentment that filled her was the sign of something coming. The Bretons say that a glad heart goes before good fortune; it is the touch of God's little finger. Certainly she felt unreasonably happy to-day. As she worked, clattering up and down the yard in her *sabots*, she sang snatches of old songs, a little woman, narrow-shouldered and bent with overwork, not comely at all, yet with so bright an eye, so close a mouth, with such a goodwill of energy about her, that she must always have been pleasant to look

upon. The cheeks are wrinkled now and the skin yellow, but the apple has been ruddy and sweet in its prime. Clatter, clatter she went across the yard to the corner where stood the great well with its shaft full of toad-flax and harts-tongue, and as she lowered the bucket she went on singing to the rhythmical turn of the wheel.

*Clink, clank*, the chain jangled as it unrolled, and the wheel creaked, and Mariki sang to her own deafening; but when as the bucket reached the water she looked up and found a man standing beside her in the sunshine, she thought for a moment that he had come out of her song for he also was "black and bright of face."

"*Bien le bonjour, Mademoiselle*, and if you please, a drink of water," he said, with the politeness of towns about him, and a smile that showed his white teeth.

Mariki eyed him sidelong and with approval, finding him on the instant a very pretty fellow. "Yes, indeed, if you will wait till the bucket comes up," she said.

He laid his hands with hers upon the wheel and they turned it together, face to face, and eye against eye; there was something in the sunshine and in the air that moved them both to gaiety and a sudden friendliness. The bucket came up slowly, very slowly, with frequent pauses; the stranger had time to tell Mariki that he was at work on the new railway and freshly settled in the countryside. He had even confided to her that he had good pay and a nice little house, and sorely needed a capable wife to look after him, when at last (with smallest encouragement from them), the bucket lifted its brimming lip to the surface. Mariki, flushed and a little confused, seized it in her thin strong arms and held it up to him to drink. Facing each other,



the bucket between them and their eyes meeting across the brightness of the water, they laughed again. There was certainly something in the sunshine or in the morning, that transfigured them both. Splash! the bucket fell with a jar and a rattle and rolled over on to its side; and Mariki, with the water streaming down her, felt herself seized by strong hands and kissed, with wet lips, on her wet face.

She pauses, as she tells me the story, and blushes with the only coquetry, I imagine, of her life. "I'd never seen him before, or him me," she says, half bashfully; "and there was the water all over us both and dripping down upon the flags. He kissed me all over my face; 'twas as foolish as a stage-play. And the sun shone so bright that there was a light like a candle in every drop of water, and I couldn't look anywhere." She pauses again, and smiles as she remembers it. "All over my face," she adds, "and I'd never been kissed before."

This was Mariki's wooing. The rest of it is marriage. She has confided to me, for instance, that he never kissed her again.

## V.

The next thing Mariki remembers clearly is a little death-bed.

The years had gone by again, full but monotonous; there had been the usual round of work and insufficiency, of sweat and hunger and blows. Her marriage had not brought anything new into her life, save the bearing of children; and it had taken away from her the delight of liberty. She was probably not worse off than her neighbours; he drank and at those times beat her, but so did other men to their wives, and at least he was passively good to her when he chanced to be sober. She worked harder than

ever for him, she took his blows, she reared his children, and it did not occur to her that she had anything to complain of. The Breton accepts life as a penalty for a space to be endured: "*la vie, c'est l'agonie; le trépas, c'est la joie.*" Thus she accepted her husband as she accepted all things, and was content with the inevitable. When he died, she even succeeded in regretting him,—in some sort—and found a phrase for his *requiem*. "He was a most respectable man," she says.

But her greatest achievement was that she brought up his children to honour him, and this difficult respect is still to this day strong and unquestioned. "When Papa had been drinking," Marie-Anne may say, "he did this, or that." And she enjoys, as children of her class do, the memory of his unengaging turbulencies; but at the first word of blame, she is instant in defence. "Drinking's no crime," she will cry, in sincerest indignation; "and if he did drink, everyone knows he brought us up well and was a most respectable man." This is the real tombstone that Mariki has erected to his memory; the other, in the cemetery, already half rotten and wholly neglected, is unimportant.

There had been four children, that Mariki counts over on her fingers with pride. "There was Marie-Anne, the prettiest baby, for all she is so big and fat now, a great good-for-nothing not to be looked at [Marie-Anne is her mother's favourite, and they understand each other]; and Marie-Elise, who came into the world as yellow as cheese, and only turned good-looking after she made her Communion; and Marie-Celestine, poor angel, who weighed less than three pounds, and was slipped into a stocking because there was nothing small enough to put on her; they

were all called after the good Mother, like me. And then there was Jean-Marie."

Here Mariki's voice is apt to break, and it is seldom that she will go further. For Jean-Marie came last, and he was his mother's darling; all the passion of her loveless life was centred in him. He was set apart from the rest; he was her man-child, her achievement, the son of her prayers, a creature to be protected and bowed down to at once, as in her heart of hearts a mother does to her son, the man she has borne. He was, in all reverence, very brother to the *petit Jésus* in the Christmas *crèche*; and when she held him in her arms, she shared the joys and the sorrows of Mary Mother.

And it came about that he was to die. "For five days he was in the agony," she says, and her lips close over each word as if she would hold it back. "My dear God, how he suffered! and I knelt all the time beside him and sang him the hymns that he loved. He was in the agony five days; five long days he lay a-dying. And all that time he looked at me with his great loving eyes, as if he could not understand, but yet he would not grieve me: it was always such a tender little heart to his mother." Mariki scrubs at an imaginary spot on the table before her, and is silent for a minute. Then she goes on slowly: "The *bon Dieu* knows best, and what He does is well. But I,—" And her lips close narrowly over her immeasurable regret.

## VI.

Mariki is sixty years old and for the first time in her life she has given a party.

She is more than a little inclined to be ashamed of such a thing, yet with her excuses there is mingled a

most innocent elation and something of the humorous dismay, the mixture of amusement, contempt, and admiration with which she regards her two elder daughters: "Such fine ladies," she scoffs, "such finicky Madams!" She finds life, and the refinements they force upon her, a more complicated thing than when she herded swine and slept in a stable; but with true Breton pride she rises above it, determinedly superior.

For the fact is she is a rich woman, nowadays, in her own estimation. When she is in full work she can make as much as nine francs a week, and has but one besides herself to keep on that; for Marie-Celestine, poor soul, her youngest daughter, is one of God's innocents, and rather a burden than a help. But nine francs a week! What matter if a few days off work bring her to beggary? A Breton never thinks of that; what he has, he spends; when he has nothing, he goes without. This is an accomplishment he learns to perfection, for there is much *going without* in his life. And there is no thrift in it, unless it be thrifty to be amazingly hard to starve. Yes, Mariki considers herself a rich woman nowadays; but it remained for this Christmas to bring the finishing touch to her rise in life, the hall-mark, as it were, of her new position. She gave a party.

It was a *reveillon*, a supper after midnight mass, in the small hours of Christmas morning; at least, that was the finish of it. It began, let us say, about nine o'clock, with riddles and songs and stories round the fire: it continued with a cheerful walk across the wakeful town to church; and it wound up lingeringly with supper and more songs and stories and jokes, and bed somewhere about the time that Mariki usually gets up. "I was never awake all

night before, except when I had to watch the dead," says Mariki; "and it made me think of the last time I sat by a corpse. It was a beautiful one—" I prefer not to insist on her reminiscences; the Bretons are not a gay people.

Truth to say, the supper was not very much of Mariki's providing, and was far beyond her wildest dreams of extravagance. She had originally proposed a dish of bacon and potatoes, and had thought it liberal to add bread and cider; but it had passed out of her hands, and she must perforce look on and submit, with doubtful approval. Her elder daughter brought a dish of cold veal, another guest a piece of pork, a third produced oranges,—the very crown of dissipation!—and a fourth the *petits gateaux* without which no refecton in France would be complete. There was also a bottle of wine, and even a small flask of liqueur, over which Mariki shook her head, tasting it with qualms. "Such a waste of good money," she vowed; but she was comfortably conscious that let who would be extravagant, her share had been no more than the potatoes, and the fire burning brightly on the hearth-stone, and the speckless perfection of her room, gay in all its trifling ornament; the paper flowers on the chest of drawers, the little china figures on the chimney-piece, and the immaculate whiteness of floor and wall, of curtain and cover. Mariki sat in her chair with a serene consciousness that there was not a grain of dust anywhere, and, with a side-glance now and then at her most cherished possession, her *ciel-de-lit*, she felt rich and luxurious and even a little profligate.

It is too long to tell here the story of that *ciel-de-lit*; how, having desired it all her life, she came on one, broken, in a back-yard, and

carried it home with her on her back. I have never quite understood how she entered into possession of it; her pride and triumph were so great that I suspect her of not having paid for it righteously. But it is delightful to observe the serene joy with which she displays it to her friends, certain of sympathy, expectant of even a little envy.

It was a gay little party, and Mariki was the life and soul of it. What tales she told, that she had learned in the far-off years when she went as swine-herd from farm to farm, tales of the Hand-o'-Bones and the Running Blood, and of the naked soul of Naik that cried in the winds. And when they began to glance over their shoulders into dark corners, all her wrinkles lifted themselves into laughter, and she told them how Noroia, the North-West Wind, was frightened away from Saint Kaer by the miller's ugly wife! And what riddles she knew that none of them had ever heard before, till she came to one that no one could guess; and after every one had given it up, it was found that she had forgotten the answer herself! And then to wind up she sang the old song that she had never forgotten, with the sound of *sabots* in it, and the gay melancholy, and the old memories that only she could understand; and, jumping up, began to dance to it as she had done long, so long ago when she was a little child in the distant heart of Brittany.

And at last the guests went home in a merry little company, singing as they went, across the town that was not yet asleep; and Mariki stood at her door, and listened to their voices travelling further and further into the darkness.

These are some of the things that Mariki remembers, and will remember to the end.

A GANG OF COURT POISONERS.<sup>1</sup>

OF all periods in national history that have ever claimed admiration from the world few surpass what Frenchmen call *le Grand Siècle*; and certainly of all courts that ever glittered and dazzled none at any time has been so brilliant as the Court of Louis the Fourteenth. Other monarchs, from Alexander to Napoleon, have been in themselves infinitely more conspicuous; but none has so contrived to be the centre of a planetary system, in which the sun concentrated all the light on and not in himself. Whatever then was in France,—wealth or wit, birth or beauty, eloquence, poetry, generals, statesmen, statesmanship, saints and sinners—all was drawn to the common centre; there has never been a Court so variously adorned as that in which Madame de Montespan afforded a text for Bossuet's discourses. Naturally it impressed the imagination of Europe; the whole object of Louis's life was to impress the imagination, and to that end amongst other things he built Versailles. St. Simon, who has shown the seamy side of many splendours, tells how that imposing structure was erected by the labour of armies and at the cost of many millions on a squalid morass. If one wishes to point the analogy, St. Simon himself gives material enough; but the blackest slough of all, which sunk right under the very centre of all the social

edifice, was never exposed to common daylight until Louis and all his Court were fine dust, and the whole order of things that they stood for had been swept wholly away. The publication of State Papers in all countries has left us with few illusions; yet it is with a sort of stupefaction that one reads the volume treating of poison and witchcraft in the seventeenth century which has been compiled by M. Funck-Brentano, not from memoirs or romances or from any collection of unauthorised assertions, but from the judicial archives and the manuscript notes of Louis's chief of police. There we read, to begin with, the full story of the Marquise de Brinvilliers, and this at least is not novel. Yet that extraordinary narration takes an entirely new character when the Brinvilliers is considered not as a monstrous exception but as a type, and in some respects not the extreme type, of a whole generation of criminals.

Mary Madeleine d'Aubray came of a good family; her father was a noble holding a good position under the crown; she was intelligent, attractive, and well educated, though, it appears by her own confession, horribly vicious from childhood upwards. She was married to a young noble, her equal in birth and fortune; the couple were rich and prosperous, and they lived on the most unexact terms. Madame de Brinvilliers made no secret of her intrigue with Ste. Croix, her husband's friend; and the Marquis retorted by proclaiming his devotion to other ladies. The only person to object was the father,

<sup>1</sup> LE DRAME DES POISONS. Etudes sur la Société du XVII<sup>e</sup> Siècle, et plus particulièrement la Cour de Louis XIV., d'après les Archives de la Bastille. Par Frantz Funck-Brentano. Paris, 1899.

M. d'Aubray, who belonged to an older generation and could not reconcile himself to the new morality. He obtained a *lettre de cachet* in virtue of which Ste-Croix was arrested, actually in the Marquise de Brinvilliers's carriage, and thrown into the Bastille, where, however, he remained only a few weeks. The result was only to inflame the passionate nature of this wholly undisciplined woman. Furious at such intolerable interference she began to compass her father's death. And another motive was added. It was an age of reckless expenditure: the Court set the example; and Madame de Brinvilliers was in the hands of a man who squandered even more freely than she. Ste-Croix, for whose benefit she had impoverished herself, knew something of chemistry, and he made suggestions. Suddenly Madame de Brinvilliers displayed a zeal for charity; she visited the hospitals, bent over the patients, talked pleasantly to them, and left little presents of cakes and wine. The unfortunates thanked her, but from that hour their sicknesses grew worse, and she came day by day to condole with them in their increasing torments. It was her way of experimentation. Presently her father began to suffer from strange pains; he withdrew from Paris to his country estate and begged his daughter to come and nurse him, which she did till his death. For eight months she was poisoning her father.

Success only stimulated her sense of power and her cupidity; her own share of the family fortune seemed a trifle, and she determined to be rid of her two brothers. Ste-Croix consented to accomplish the two operations, but only in return for large sums which she promised him in writing. Suspicions were aroused, but the doctors could detect nothing, and impunity converted the woman

into a sort of *ménad* of crime. She talked openly of her medicine-chest that "held many inheritances;" she gave arsenic to her daughter because "the girl was stupid," but, repenting, administered an antidote. And in the meanwhile she was in the hands not only of Ste-Croix but also of a lackey who had been the accomplice and instrument; as if that were not enough, she betrayed her secret to the tutor of her sons, a young divinity-student, one of her many paramours; and with all these people she had endless terrible scenes, threatening, and attempting, alternately their death and her own. Her main preoccupation was the box with her letters and pledge of payment held by Ste-Croix, and in fact this in the end was her ruin. Ste-Croix died, and died heavily in debt; his property was seized, and with it the casket. Thus definiteness was given to the suspicions which were rife all round her (her husband, though he lived under one roof with her, took open precautions at every meal), and the case was pressed by her brother's widow. Before the judges she was implacably defiant, denying all to the last. The President vainly endeavoured to bring her to a state of submission by dwelling on the enormity of her offences, the gravest of which was the last,—an attempt at suicide in prison, strange but perfectly coherent logic of a good Catholic! Her charm, her courage, and her position acted on the judges, and a conviction was only brought about with great difficulty. At the sentence the President wept, while she remained dry-eyed.

Then began the strangest part of the story. She was confided for her last hours to the Abbé Piron, a priest of singular gentleness and sanctity; his account of his dealings with her survives and might, says M. Brentano, be the work of Racine in prose. He

describes how he found her among her servants (who were devoted to their mistress) perfectly composed yet haughty and resolute. But as the confessor spoke to her of the love of God, and assured her that there was yet hope of forgiveness and a glorious regeneration, his words took effect and she burst into tears. She begged the priest, who had not yet said his daily mass, to go and say it, praying for her as he did so, and promised that on his return she would be better prepared to receive him. And accordingly he found her now as submissive as she had before been defiant. We may follow in long detail the rest of that day spent with her, her tranquillity and the thoughtfulness which she showed for him and for her servants. Nothing could give a completer portrait of a woman perfectly well-bred, who in her remorse is neither abject nor hysterical, but has the serenity of a well-balanced soul. Yet this was the creature who had spent eight months in doing her father to death and who had rolled on the floor in fury, threatening alternately to poison her lover and herself.

That night her confessor got no rest for thinking of what lay before her on the next day; she slept like a child. In the morning she heard her sentence read in full; death and the torture she expected, but when she heard the detail of her public penitence in a cart she showed signs of trouble and demanded a second reading. Introduced to the torture-room she made a statement. The torture, she said, was inevitable, but she desired to make her full confession first. "And," said she, "had I seen three weeks ago the person you have sent to me you would have known three weeks ago all that you are to learn now." The confession was complete. Then came the tor-

ture,—the question by water, which was poured in enormous quantities down the throat through a funnel so as to occasion horrible internal pains. Three hours later Piron was called to her and he found a changed woman. Her eyes were inflamed and burning, her lips tense; during the ordeal she had been seized with another outburst of passion and had falsely accused of complicity two persons against whom she bore a grudge. Yet gradually the confessor regained his empire over her, and she returned to her gentleness of contrition. Tears came back to her parched eyes: her first thought was to undo the calumnies she had uttered; and she submitted without impatience to the renewed cross-examination that her avowal occasioned. This interview with the judges took place in a chapel, and when it was over she prostrated herself for an instant before the altar, then rose and with her confessor beside her walked out on her way to execution. At the door a crowd of well-bred people jostled one another for a view of the great criminal, and in a tone loud enough to be heard she commented to Piron on this "strange kind of curiosity." Through the streets her progress was made in a little cart where there was scarce room for her, the priest, and the headsman. The streets were blocked with people, and every window was packed. Piron describes the first revulsion of her nature against this degradation; the contraction of her features, the flame kindling in her eyes as she listened to the howls of the mob. It was then, it seems, that Le Brun the painter saw her, and from his brief view carried away in memory the dreadful nightmare of a visage that may be seen fixed by his pencil in the Louvre. But gradually she returned to her self-control and her face



altered. Kneeling on the steps of Notre Dame she recited meekly the formula of penitence dictated by the executioner in public avowal of her crimes; but in all her bearing there was no trace of fear even before the hideous paraphernalia of the scaffold, and the last act was played out in the sight of that vast concourse without bravado yet with absolute composure. For half an hour she was on that stage while the headsman prepared her for the blow, stripping off her cap, baring her shoulders, and cutting away her hair. "I doubt," says her confessor, "whether in all her life she was so patient under the hands of her maid as there while her head was shaven. She let him tie her hands as if he had been fastening bracelets of gold on her arms, and adjust the cord on her neck as if it had been a necklace of pearls." Night was falling over Paris before the end came; her eyes were bandaged and she still prayed fervently yet without fear. "If," says Piron, "I had to paint a truly contrite countenance, filled with compunction and the hope of pardon, I would imagine none other than that which I still can picture and shall picture to myself all my life."

The executioner swept her head off with a single stroke. "Sir," he said, turning to the priest, "was not that a fine blow? I always recommend myself to God on these occasions," he added, "and up till now He has always helped me. This lady has been on my mind the week past; I will have six masses said for her soul;" and so saying he uncorked a bottle and drank off a deep draught of wine. The body was burned, the ashes scattered; there were those among the audience who were convinced that they had seen a halo round her head on the scaffold, and the word went out that she was a saint. Is there a stranger story

anywhere? For good as well as for evil it was an age of faith. If the Brinvilliers was scarcely a saint, at least her confessor by all records came as near to be one as is given to mortals, and her faith during her last hours was as sincere as his.

But if people believed then in the power of God with a simplicity that seems strange to us, they believed with an equal simplicity, and with consequences no less remarkable, in the power of the devil. Alchemy was still a ruling passion; seekers of hidden treasure made the fortune of diviners; dealers in magic trafficked freely in love-potions; palmists and soothsayers did a brisk business; and the very centre of all this superstition was the Court itself. About it buzzed a whole swarm of witches, fortune-tellers, and sellers of drugs, many of whom made their way in with receipts for the complexion, washes, dyes, powders, and the rest, and passed on to gipsy magic. Chiromancy flourished then as it does now, and if a ground were needed for applying the law that strikes the poor rogues who wheedle sixpences from maidservants to the personages who give what are called consultations in Bond Street, one might find it in the remarks made by two of the most notorious practitioners in Paris after the gang was fairly in the hands of justice. "No better deed could be done," declared Marie Bosse, "than to exterminate the whole tribe of people that read hands, for they are the ruin of women, gentle and simple; since the fortune-teller discerns in a very short time their weak point, and by means of it can lead them where she chooses." La Voisin, most infamous of all these creatures, made the same recommendation, for, said she, "one hears strange stories in this traffic," and when love-affairs went wrong, poisoning was a common

practice. The same people who supplied the philtre to secure a lover would supply also the means to be rid of an inconvenient husband.

Madame de Brinvilliers was tried and executed in the summer of 1676, and from that time onwards the talk of poisoning was everywhere in the air. Mysterious tales of gloves that would kill at a touch and of clothes that destroyed the wearer were rife, though as a matter of fact all the skill of that day scarcely went beyond graduating doses of arsenic. Any chemist to-day has a knowledge and a power compared to which the resources of Ste-Croix and his mistress were babyish. But if the drugs were rudimentary the means of detection were still more inadequate, and impunity gave insolence to the traffickers. Towards the end of 1678 a little lawyer was dining with a certain ladies' tailor named Vigoureux, and among the other guests was a fortune-teller, Marie Bosse, a big, coarse woman, who, as the wine went round, began to sing the praises of her trade. Duchesses and princes flocked to her shop, she said; three more poisonings and she might retire on a fortune. The company laughed as if at a capital joke, but the little lawyer took it seriously, for he saw a look of caution pass, and he went with his story to the police. One of the officials was ordered to send his wife to the woman with a complaint against her husband; and at the second visit she came home provided with a phial of poison. La Reynie, Chief of Police, pounced on the whole gang, and by the 12th of March, 1679, Catherine Monvoisin (La Voisin) was in custody and the enquiry pressing on hot-foot. Pushing from point to point La Reynie soon had all the threads in his hand and laid the facts, as he knew them, before the King. Neither La Reynie

nor Louis then guessed how far the clues would lead them, and in April an extraordinary commission was established to deal with the matter, the famous *Chambre Ardent*.

The evidence before the judges was of the strangest kind. Not confining itself to murder in all the forms, it was concerned also with sacrilege and demoniacal practices. All this crew of women, whom La Reynie had drawn into his net, were witches who believed in their own witchcraft: though, like the West African doctors, they supplemented their spells by poisoning, yet they were convinced of their own ability to bring about death itself by sheer sorcery; and the most potent spell was the black mass completed by human sacrifice. In this horrible parody of the sacrament a woman's naked body served for the altar, and the chalice set on it was filled with blood from the throat of a young child. The mass was performed by a priest, and there was more than one priest found among the rabble of alchemists, conjurors, and sorcerers, who preyed on the witches as the witches preyed on their clients. The supply of children for this rite was constant, for the witches and fortune-tellers were all of them quack doctors, midwives, and receivers of undesired children. La Voisin declared that she herself had made away with upwards of two thousand infants in the way of her trade. Yet, and here is a curious trait, she would take any pains to secure baptism for the child. The wholesale practice of child-murder sounds incredible, but the Voisin's story is amply borne out by other testimony,—amongst other things by the appalling fact that her daughter, when on the point of childbirth, fled from the house and only returned after the child was safely bestowed. This industry was richly

rewarded; money flowed in upon her, though she spent recklessly, part in subventions to alchemists. There exists still the account sent in to her for a prophetic robe specially embroidered, for which she paid fifteen thousand *livres*, equivalent to £3,000 of our money. She could afford it; her house was daily thronged with consultants, and her fees were like a *prima donna's*.

One can only vaguely indicate for the general reader the details of which M. Brentano is not sparing, based, it must be remembered, on the confessions of the criminals themselves. The whole rises before one like some kind of nightmare: these gross, drunken women with their accomplices like the priest Guibourg, chief celebrant of the black mass, where he slaughtered among others the children of himself and his paramour; and alongside of them the mob of fine ladies (for the clients were mostly women) who came with stories of their intrigues, believed potently in the efficacy of the hideous magic, and promised protection to those who worked it.

That, as it soon appeared, was the central difficulty. The *Chambre Ardente* sat from April, 1679, to October, 1680, and after a period of suspension from May 19th, 1681, to July 2nd, 1682. In that time three hundred and seventy-five persons were arrested on its mandate. Thirty-six were executed with torture, but the guiltiest escaped; they had friends in too high places, and at the last the whole enquiry had to be burked. Of the accused many were acquitted in the face of the clearest evidence. Madame de Dreux, for instance, a pretty young woman, was so much in love with the famous Duc de Richelieu that she wanted to make away with any woman he looked at. She had tried to poison her husband and to

kill Madame de Richelieu by witchcraft. But two of her cousins were among the judges, and she was a charming person; the world thought the whole story very amusing, and the judges were content to admonish her.

Madame Léféron belonged, like Madame de Dreux, to the *noblesse de robe*; her husband was a high-placed magistrate. According to the Voisin's confession this lady, though fifty, was enamoured of a certain M. de Prade who desired to marry her. The phial which was given her produced its effect: M. Léféron died and M. de Prade succeeded him; but in a short time the second husband began to be aware that the lady had designs on his life also, and he fled for safety to Turkey. Madame Léféron was sentenced to exile from Paris and a trifling fine, "though there were," wrote Louvois to his master, "thirteen or fourteen witnesses of her crime." Madame de Poulaillon, another person of good position, was acquitted on a like charge; but the *bourgeoisie* were not so fortunate, and Madame Brunet, a merchant's wife with a passion for a flute-player, who rid herself of her obstacle, was executed and burned. Yet with all the leniency that was shown society grew restive. Madame de Sévigné speaks in the harshest terms of La Reynie, the moving spirit of the enquiry. The tone was to treat the whole story as pure fiction and La Reynie's continued existence as a proof that there could be no poisoners in France. Still, the King was resolute, but as things advanced the judges grew more and more timorous. The Voisin was tried and sentenced to execution with torture, but La Reynie complained bitterly that the torture was not seriously applied, and that the judges made so slight an attempt at interrogation that the witch herself felt obliged

before death, "for the acquittal of her conscience," to make a spontaneous declaration. Le Sage, a magician and drug-monger, was promised a free pardon by Louvois if he would speak fully; he spoke to such effect that the magistrates stopped him, declaring the testimony to be a pack of inventions. The Voisin's daughter, who had been a witness but not an accomplice of the crimes, was examined six months after her mother's execution, and she spoke also. Her testimony was such that Louis wrote to prevent La Reynie from laying it before the Court. Finally, in October, 1680, the witch Françoise Filastre, in a confession made after sentence was passed on her, added her version of the same events, completely bearing out the independent statements of Le Sage and Marguerite Monvoisin. Louis, on receiving the report of her examination, suspended the sittings of the Court, ordered the minutes of the three testimonies to be brought into his presence and there caused them to be burned. The scandal had reached the throne. What we know of these depositions is only from the manuscript notes of La Reynie taken down during the enquiry which he conducted, but they are amply sufficient.

Next to the King himself the most conspicuous person in France during the thirteen years between 1667 and 1680,—and these years comprised the most brilliant period of that famous reign—was the Marquise de Montespan, who was married in 1663 at the age of twenty-two, but soon grew envious of the position occupied at Court by the reigning favourite, Mademoiselle de la Vallière. In a few months the gentle and pathetic La Vallière, always distracted between penitence and love, was not even left to resign herself to penitence but figured in the train

of her supplanter. At Versailles Madame de Montespan occupied a suite of twenty rooms on the first floor, the Queen having only eleven on the second. Seven children were born to the favourite after her uncomplaisant husband had been relegated to indignant exile; and all of them were declared legitimate by the Parliament and recognised as *enfants de France*. Such was her position; and the woman who made and kept it for herself by sheer force of character was no ordinary person. It was not only her beauty, nor her talent for costume, nor even her gaiety, that lent to her a special charm in the eyes of so exacting a critic as St. Simon. She had a wit and a grace that won ready acceptance for airs which in another would have seemed mere vulgar arrogance, and her talk contrived to combine eloquence and singularity of phrase with natural fitness of expression in a way so personal to her and so charming that it seemed as if she had the secret of a special language not only for herself but for those who lived in intimacy with her; for he certifies that, up to the day when he wrote, the few surviving persons who had been of her household might be easily distinguished by this charm of speech. In short, in all the long pageant of royal favourites that history parades there is no figure so dazzling as that of this imperious and beautiful woman whose sin was scarcely in those days accounted a misdemeanour,—for all Paris thought the Marquis de Montespan a most unreasonable husband — and whose single motive was a boundless ambition. In a smaller sphere the Marquise de Brinvilliers had been urged on to crime by the same passion for display; but the Brinvilliers was debauched, Madame de Montespan knew no temptation except pride.

She had made herself a position without precedent or parallel: she did nothing to jeopardise it; but to maintain it she was ready to have recourse to any expedient.

Clever woman as she was, she was not exempt from the beliefs of her age, and in 1666, while La Vallière still held her place, she became a client of the Voisin. The witch gave her philtres,—pastes composed of ingredients such as Shakespeare describes in *MACBETH*, which had been placed under the chalice while the mass was said and thus received consecration. These were slipped into the King's food; but that did not suffice, and soon Madame de Montespan herself was assisting in a magical rite. It was again a parody of the mass performed by a priest (the Abbé Marietti, a man of good family), who read a gospel while his book rested on the head of the beautiful young woman as she knelt before him and prayed for the King's favour to pass away from La Vallière and to be transferred to herself. There were other incantations over the hearts of two pigeons which had been "consecrated" under the names of Louis and La Vallière during the mass; and so the witchcraft went on till in 1668 Madame de Montespan realised her hope. All went smoothly for three years, but the King was no constant lover, and in 1672 the favourite was again in the Voisin's hands; and this time matters were graver. It was the black mass that was said now, with the filthy Abbé Guibourg,—a creature with one eye, bloated features, and a face stained the colour of wine-lees—acting as celebrant, while Madame de Montespan's body formed the altar. Not once but many times in the next five or six years the disgusting ceremony was repeated; and every time the return of Louis to his mistress gave her fresh reasons for repeating the spell. The details

are too horrible to reproduce, but the slaughter of the child was an invariable part of them. And it is curious to note in the deposition of La Voisin's daughter, that when Madame de Montespan could not be present at the mass the ceremony was nevertheless faithfully and exactly performed, the Voisin herself personating the supplicant.

But gradually Madame de Montespan's day was passing; her humiliations were renewed with little hope of another triumphant return to favour. The torture which Louis, in his astounding egotism, had inflicted on La Vallière, was now falling on La Vallière's rival; Madame de Montespan was constrained to form part of the new favourite's train, and even to assist in her adornment. And what La Vallière had endured was not endurable for Madame de Montespan. It was not for philtres that she came now to La Voisin but for poisons. The horrible tortures reserved for regicides intimidated the others, but the Voisin laughed at them. The price offered was worth the risk,—more than £50,000 of our money. Mademoiselle de Fontanges was to be done to death with gloves or other poisoned fabrics; as for the King, the Voisin herself was to hand him a petition in its envelope, the touch of which on his bare hands would be fatal. So at least Madame firmly believed; whether her poison-mongers believed or not is another matter. This hopeful scheme was actually in progress,—the Voisin had made one unavailing journey to Versailles—when the arrests began, and the witch was taken. Madame de Montespan was furious, but had recourse to another sorceress, La Filastre; but Le Sage, then in custody, having named the Filastre as an accomplice, she also was seized, and from her La Reynie heard full confirmation



of the story already twice repeated; and it was on receiving this deposition that Louis ordered the sittings of the *Chambre Ardente* to be suspended.

The scandal was more than the King could face. Louvois was devoted to the Montespan interest; Colbert had a sort of reverential attachment to the dignity of the throne which prompted him to advise a hushing up at all costs. Madame de Montespan herself in an interview with Louis, arranged for her by Louvois, ended by admitting everything, but, imperious and masterful even in her disgrace, threw the whole blame upon her lover's cruelty and neglect. Nevertheless La Reynie continued to press the King in the name of law and justice to make an end once and for all of this monstrous disorder that infected the whole Court. For, if Madame de Montespan had recourse to these devilries to supplant La Vallière, other rivals addressed themselves to the witches for means to supplant her in her turn. In 1680 Madame de Sévigné describes the general agitation, and how, as if in some epidemic, people sent round to each other's houses for news of the arrests. Indignation was universal against the police. The Duchess of Bouillon, or Mancini, had bought poisons to get rid of her husband; the Duke heard the story from the King's own lips, but none the less he repeated the amazing scene played in the case of Madame de Dreux, and led his wife into court by her right hand while the Duc de Vendôme (the lover for whose sake the lady desired her freedom) held the left. Madame Sévigné tells the story and treats it as an excellent joke; the witch-poisons were not to be taken seriously. Madame de Bouillon made a brilliant appearance in the witness-box and one of her answers ran through Paris.

La Reynie was questioning her with that naive credulity which is characteristic of the whole business: had she, he asked, ever seen the devil at any of these magical rites? "I see him now," she retorted; "he is old and ugly and dressed like a Privy Councillor." The King took La Reynie's view of the matter and persisted in exiling this charming person to her estate at Nérac. But the judges showed themselves more and more unwilling to press home enquiries except against the criminals of the lower orders, and the thing became a scandal. When the Commission resumed its sittings in 1681 La Reynie insisted that the full evidence should be laid before it, and then began a struggle between him, Louis, and the ministers, in which neither side would give way; the King declaring that the Commission must give its decisions on such evidence as could expediently be submitted to it, La Reynie insisting that the work must be done and done thoroughly, and that judges should not be permitted to pass sentence on the lives of men except where the full evidence was delivered in conformity with the law. At last the Chief of the Police, finding it impossible to carry his point, insisted at least on the extirpation of the gang from society by the only means possible. He advised that, since it was impossible to try openly the accused who had knowledge of the facts concerning Madame de Montespan, they should be imprisoned by *lettre de cachet* in the royal fortresses. The advice was followed: the *Chambre Ardente* was closed, after one or two of the less notable accomplices in the poisoning trade had been publicly executed; and the whole gang of one hundred and forty-seven prisoners confined at the Bastille or Vincennes on charges of poisoning or traffic in poisons, of sacrilege or impiety, were



immured for life. At the same time it was ordered that all these prisoners should be confined in a place remote from public hearing; they were rogues who had invented against Madame de Montespan a tissue of lies which had been proved false before the Chamber, and if they opened their mouths to repeat these monstrosities the gaolers should reply to them with blows. Among them were some of the blackest criminals, notably the Abbé Guibourg, and one cannot regret for them the order issued by Louvois that each should be fastened to the wall of his cell by a chain attached to a ring riveted round the body. But unfortunately the prisoners in the poisoning case had been shut up, both in the Bastille and at Vincennes, with others. Three women are mentioned, who for no other offence than that of having heard the story in prison, were confined for the rest of their lives,—though, it is only fair to say, the places of detention were convents, and reasonable provision was made for their comfort; while one man was liberated in 1682 and promised an income for life on condition that he accepted banishment from the kingdom.

Madame de Montespan, the central figure of all this extraordinary group, lived at Court for another ten years. Louis continued to visit her publicly but his ostentatious tolerance passed gradually into contempt. In 1691 she withdrew to the community of St. Joseph which she herself had founded, and her behaviour there is described by St. Simon with genuine emotion. The step which she had taken seems to have been the mark of a sincere conversion, and her penitence

increased continually with her life. Beautiful as the day she remained while she lived, says St. Simon, and strong in health, though haunted by a continual terror lest she should be surprised by death. She never slept except in a well lighted room with her women about her, and desired whenever she woke to find them talking or busy lest they also should sleep and death might steal a march into the unsentinelled chamber. Her end, when it came, was edifying, and marked by "the gentleness and peace which attended all her actions." It may be questioned whether the Abbé Piron could have so transformed the Marquise de Brinvilliers that her life should have been as saint-like as her death; and yet the tragedies in which the Brinvilliers played her terrible part are not so hard for the imagination to conceive as the plunge into barbarism and the revolting atrocities of the black mass among which one of the wittiest and most beautiful of all witty and beautiful French ladies figured by the side of the witch Voisin and the bestial priest Guibourg. It is not easy to believe these stories, but they stand established by the minutely circumstantial accounts of several witnesses, two at least of whom had nothing more to fear from man, for the deposition was made after the law had passed its extremest sentence. Perhaps the truth is that normal human character is more or less continuous and coherent; but where there is a strong belief in the supernatural, faith operating for good or evil may utterly transfigure or deform character, and natural impulses under this stimulus overpass their natural limit.

## IMPRESSIONS OF KLONDIKE.

## II.

WE pitched our tents at the head of Lake Bennet, where we were forced to wait nearly a month before the ice broke up, and enabled us to start on our long journey over the waterways that lead to Klondike. The weather was cold and stormy, and exceedingly depressing; the atmosphere was laden with moisture, and the piercing chill of melting snow was aggravated by bitter winds. Colonel Steele, of whom it would be difficult to speak in too high terms, did all he could to render the delay less dreary. The North-West Mounted Police, of which he was in command, are a splendid body of men, who discharged their manifold and incongruous duties with patience and remarkable discretion.

In 1898 the police were not only the maintainers of law and order in circumstances of much difficulty; they were also Custom House officers, post-masters, mail-carriers, sanitary authorities, coroners, registrars of death, inspectors of boats, compilers of records of the names and addresses of the forty thousand people rushing to the Klondike, the issuers of mining, timber, and other licenses, the preservers of concessions granted by the Ottawa Government, and last, but by no means least, the peace-makers. At every turn they were called upon to arbitrate in the quarrels that arose between partners. If any two or more men had a dispute they resorted to the police for its settlement; and as such quarrels were innumerable, and were generally of a bewildering, fatuous, irrational character, it says much for the weary, over-worked

officials that they were able to dispose of most of them satisfactorily, and to mete out a rough and ready justice between men prompt to go to any lengths to revenge real or imaginary wrongs.

The ordinary man is ill-fitted to bear removal from the restraints of civilisation. Too often he loses control over his evil passions, and all sense of proportion in looking at things that affect his own interests. He becomes incapable of curbing his brutish desires, or of applying tact and reason to extricate himself from ordinary difficulties and disagreements. Any sense of humour he ever possessed abandons him; every mole-hill becomes a mountain, and the sum total of his grievances a delirium of the brain.

Any one who wished to study human nature, stripped of all disguises, had ample opportunity afforded him by the people who composed the mad rush to the Klondike in 1898. Life-long friends, who had set out together in search of a fortune, quarrelled over paltry details and parted the bitterest of enemies. Each was determined that the other should not get the better of him; cunning was matched against cunning, suspicion bred suspicion, and both thirsted for revenge, that abject passion of abject minds.

It was with human material of this kind that the North-West Mounted Police had to deal. And the success with which a mere handful of men controlled, guided, and over-awed the insensate tide of humanity was extraordinary.

Many curious and humorous scenes were witnessed at Bennet, and all along the route. When a party split up irrevocably, stores, outfit, and equipment had to be divided among the members in proportion to their respective shares. You can divide food, clothes, tools, and fire-arms, but one would imagine you could not divide a tent, a stove, or a boat. I have, however, seen it done. Rather than that either should get the better of the other, I have seen two partners rip a tent in two, saw a boat in half, and throw the stove into the river.

The rage of man against man seemed to reach its full fury as people drew near Dawson and the gold-fields, where they hoped in a few weeks to fill their pockets with nuggets. A little island, at the mouth of the Stewart River, became the rallying point of discontent, and was the scene of so many violent quarrels, and dissolutions of partnerships, that some one was inspired by a happy thought to put up on the bank a sign in large letters, *Split-up Island*. I never passed that spot without seeing at least one party in the throes of dissolution, with the mocking sign close by. If the disputants got as much satisfaction out of their quarrels as we, and other spectators, derived amusement, they were not to be pitied.

But man's too frequent inhumanity to man in the mad rush to the Klondike was as nothing compared to his cruelty to animals. The horrors of the White Pass in this respect, the first time I crossed it, can never be forgotten. From one end to the other the trail was strewn with dead horses. It was said that over three thousand had been worked to death by brutal owners or employers. It was only too evident that most of these poor creatures had been used to transport supplies

across the pass, till they dropped from starvation and exhaustion. Still more horrible was the sight of horses, too weak to be of any further service, abandoned on the pass, slowly to starve or freeze to death. This was only one side of the cruelty of man. The savage ferocity with which horses and dogs were too often treated made one's blood boil. Representations to the police did some good, and I am glad to think that more than one brutal fellow paid dearly for his atrocities; but in such a country, and under such conditions, it was impossible to put any effectual check upon the evil.

Travellers over the Chilcoot Pass cross a series of lakes before Lake Bennet is reached. Of this series Lake Lindeman is the last, and is connected with Lake Bennet by a narrow channel filled with dangerous rocks. The neck of land separating the two lakes is a dreary waste of sand and bare rocks. Close by the trail is a lonely grave, enclosed by a rude railing, the memorial of a sad tragedy.

Among those who started for the Klondike in 1897 was a young man of much energy and determination, the only son of a widowed mother. He was popular among his fellows, and is remembered not less by his pleasant character than by his misfortunes. Through an accident he lost his outfit before he reached the summit of the Chilcoot Pass. This was a trying reverse, and necessitated a return to Dyee, at the head of the Lynn Canal, to buy fresh supplies at a heavy cost. With infinite toil he packed these across the pass and reached Long Lake, where, by a second mischance, nearly everything he possessed was destroyed by the sudden breaking up of the ice. Undismayed by this new buffet of adversity, he again returned to the

coast, and spent all the money he had left in a third outfit, which, with the aid of sympathisers, was safely got over the pass and brought down to the head of Lindeman. There he built his boat, loaded it with his stores, and started. He crossed the lake successfully, but in trying to enter the channel leading to Lake Bennet his boat was dashed against some sunken rocks, and swamped in comparatively shallow water. This fresh calamity was more than he could bear; it unhinged his mind, and, in spite of offers of help from those about him, he shot himself a few hours later on the spot where he now lies buried. There was to me an infinite pathos in that lonely grave, and a sympathy between the dark fortunes of its silent occupant and the gloom and solitude of the surroundings.

Being anxious to get away from the unhealthy and crowded encampment of Bennet, we took advantage of the first opening in the ice, and started down the lake in our Peterborough canoe on May 22nd. We bid farewell with particular reluctance to Colonel Steele, as I believe everyone did who ever met him,—except members of the criminal classes.

There was a fresh wind blowing in our favour, and in spite of our canoe being heavily laden, we covered the first seven or eight miles very quickly. Up to this point the channel through the ice had been along the shore of the lake, but it suddenly opened out into a wide basin, and then extended, as far as could be seen, through ice about a third of a mile from land. There were only two of us in the canoe. We were good boatmen, but we had had no experience of the dangers of shifting ice. The weather was fine, and we thought there was little or no risk in going on; but before we had gone more than another

mile or so, the wind became unpleasantly boisterous, and we awoke to the fact that the ice was closing in upon us. As there was no sign ahead of any opening to the shore, and the ice was too rotten to bear, there was no alternative but to go back. The decision was easy, but the task difficult.

It was not until we began to paddle against it that we recognised the strength of the wind. The canoe, which before had been flying through the water, now seemed to move by inches. It was a paddle, if not for life, certainly for canoe and stores. If the ice had caught us, the canoe would have been crushed to pieces, and I doubt if we should have succeeded in reaching the shore by crawling over the rotten ice. I had never experienced before the extraordinary accession of strength and endurance that a man receives when he suddenly has to face danger. The channel had been quite a narrow one from the first, and the ice closed in with appalling rapidity. Had we delayed another ten minutes, or had we not paddled steadily with all our strength, we should have been caught. As it was, before we reached open water the passage became so narrow that we could not paddle, and had to propel the canoe with poles. The ice jammed up solid, and kept us camped there for nearly a week.

The scenery of Lake Bennet is very striking. At its upper end the lake, which is over twenty-five miles long, is little more than half a mile wide, and is walled in on either side by continuous masses of bare rock, torn and serrated by the forces of Nature, which rise abruptly from the water's edge to a height of some two thousand feet. The lower half of the lake varies in width from one to three miles; the hills are neither so steep nor so high, and are here and there divided by

stretches of comparatively flat land, covered with pine, poplar, and scrubby timber. A narrow channel, called Caribou Crossing, connects Bennet with Nares Lake, which flows into Tagish Lake, the next large body of water we crossed after leaving the scene of our adventure. About a mile wide at its head the lake opens out and contracts several times during its length of seventeen miles. We approached Windy Arm, some seven miles down the water, with a feeling of trepidation. Strong winds were said to sweep almost constantly down this arm, making navigation dangerous for small boats, and often detaining travellers for several days. We had seen the suddenness with which a strong wind and big waves arise in Lake Bennet, and had no desire to experience a storm in our little eighteen-foot, heavily-laden canoe. But Windy Arm had no dangers in store for us, and, except for anxiety from shifting ice, our journey to the head of Miles Canyon was pleasant enough.

It was late on the evening of the second day of our journey that we reached Five Mile River which joins Tagish with Marsh Lake. It was almost dark as we entered the river, which was still very low and not more than a hundred yards wide. In the channel were several awkward rocks, and we were not sorry to reach a favourable spot for camping. Here we had our first experience of mosquitoes, which gathered about us in swarms; but it was still too early in the season for them to be really troublesome, and we soon discovered that their hum was worse than their bite. After a supper of bacon, bread, and stewed fruit, we wrapped ourselves up in our blankets, and went to sleep on our waterproof cork mattresses, which proved to be most excellent things for camping in the

open. During our journey of five hundred and fifty miles to Dawson I only put up a tent twice. On fine nights I slept in the open on my mattress, with an air-pillow under my head; and when it rained I covered myself with the canvas flaps, which effectually shed the water. Just as dawn was beginning to break I was aroused by R., and half asleep scrambled out of my blankets imagining that something serious had happened; but the alarm was only caused by the appearance of a black bear on the opposite side of the river. Rifle and ammunition were at the bottom of the canoe, which had not been unloaded, and long before we could get at them the bear had disappeared.

Tagish Police Post proved to be only about a mile further on, and when, after an early breakfast, we arrived there, we found the river crowded with boats, moored three and four deep along the bank, waiting to be inspected by the police in their capacity of Custom House officers. As this was the second ordeal of the kind to which everyone had to submit on Canadian territory, the first being at the summits of the two passes, there was not a little dissatisfaction at the delay. Few parties got away under a week, as the number of officials was in inverse ratio to the number of boats, the contents of which were narrowly examined, unless the owners had invoices of Canadian firms for all their belongings. The Government had determined to collect every penny possible from travellers who had bought their outfits in America, and they succeeded.

It was amusing to hear Americans, who extract the last farthing from strangers under particularly oppressive Custom Laws, declaim against the meanness and injustice of the Canadian Government. As there were many notorious smugglers, and many

hopelessly perverse, or ignorant, men among the crowd, the work of clearing boats did not progress rapidly. But the over-worked police did their task well, and, so far as I could see, did it without fear or favour.

At Tagish we saw the Indians who only a short time before had killed Meehan and wounded Fox on the McClintock River. The crime was a cold-blooded one, and created a sensation in the district. The murderers, four in number, were under guard in a tent, and exhibited the stolid indifference to their surroundings and fate which is characteristic of the noble savage.

Physically the Indians of the Tagish district are very unlike the Red Man of the United States and British North America. They are light in colour, short, thickly built, with somewhat almond-shaped eyes, straight black hair, high cheekbones, flat features, round heads, small hands and feet; they are probably the direct descendants of pure Malays.

Fox, with whom I afterwards travelled, gave me a thrilling account of his narrow escape. He and Meehan were old prospectors in the country, and had never had any trouble before with the natives. Early in the season of 1898 they went up the McClintock River, and fell in with an Indian settlement. Nothing occurred to arouse their suspicions, though some of the men showed an unpleasant curiosity about articles in the boat, and evidently coveted the fine sleeping-ropes and hunting-rifles. After leaving the village, Fox and Meehan went further up the river, and spent some days in prospecting. Much to their surprise they suddenly discovered that they had been followed, and were being watched by four young Indians, who could give no satisfactory account of what had brought them there. Hav-

ing practically finished their work, the two white men felt that the sooner they returned to Lake Marsh the better. They struck their tent, loaded their boat, and started down the river. The Indians took a short cut through the woods, lay in ambush just above a short bend, and when the boat got opposite to them, fired. Meehan was shot dead; Fox was struck a little above the heart, and fell back into the bottom of the boat, where he lay for some minutes. This undoubtedly saved his life; the Indians, believing they had killed both men, came out of the bushes, and ran to catch the boat when it should come round the bend. So soon as they were out of sight Fox crawled to the stern, put out an oar, and guided the boat to the opposite bank. He got out, and gave the boat a vigorous push towards the middle of the stream. Severely wounded, and bleeding profusely, he set off through the bush with great caution, taking care, so far as possible, to leave no trail behind him. He knew that to be tracked was certain death; but he hoped that the Indians would think that on being shot he had fallen into the river. Unfortunately they had either seen him land, or guessed that he had escaped, and so soon as they had secured the boat they crossed the river in search of him. The precautions taken by Fox, however, baffled them. They could not detect his trail, and while they hunted up and down for him, he lay hidden under some bushes. They did not relinquish the search until it began to get dusk, when the four jumped into the boat and started down stream for their village.

By this time Fox, who was eighteen miles from the nearest white men of whom he knew, was very weak from loss of blood. There was no time to be lost, for the Indians would



probably return to hunt him down. Slowly he made his way over the rough ground, through the brush, and woods, and swamps. It was a terrible journey, and took him over forty hours to accomplish. He had no food, and no compass by which to guide his course; but his instincts directed him aright, and he at last reached a camp of white men. He was in a pitiable condition, exhausted from loss of blood, from exertion, and from want of food; his clothes were covered with blood, and he presented a wild and ghastly appearance. So soon as he had had some food the men placed him in their boat and took him to Tagish Police Post, over twenty miles away; here his wound was dressed, and he was able to give an accurate description of the four Indians.

The police started at once in pursuit of the murderers, but it is doubtful if they would have succeeded in capturing them had it not been for the assistance of one of the tribe, who, either from motives of spite against the men, or from abhorrence of the crime, gave information which eventually led to all four being arrested. They were afterwards sent to Dawson,

where they were tried and found guilty. Three of them were condemned to be hanged, and the youngest was sentenced to penal servitude for life; but, owing to a series of legal blunders and complications, it was more than sixteen months after the crime before the execution took place. In the meantime one of the condemned men died in prison.

A short time after the trial and sentence, the body of the Indian who had aided the police, was found, stripped naked, in the river. How the informer met his death remained a mystery; but the occurrence caused so much uneasiness that it was thought necessary to strengthen the force in charge of the Tagish Post in case an attack was made upon it.

Fox, who is a short thick-set little man, still carried the bullet inside him in August, 1898, the doctor having been unable to extract it. He seemed, however, none the worse for his thrilling experience, the details of which he told me in a quiet, unostentatious manner that was particularly dramatic and effective.

CHARLES C. OSBORNE.

*(To be continued.)*

## A SOLUTION OF THE DOMESTIC PROBLEM.

"As the eye of a maid unto her mistress;" so runs the ancient phrase with its pleasant suggestion of a time when the Domestic Problem was not, and its happy hint at a relationship which needed not the flattering unction of a *Miss*. "The mere fact of the prefix," says Mrs. Major in the August number of this Magazine, "will induce an entirely different tone into the relations between employer and employed;" "the word 'servant' must be completely abolished;" "in place of servants we must have house *employées*;" and should this fail then are there other and yet more drastic remedies proposed, from the maids being relieved of their caps to the masters being deprived of their dinners, in order to avert the revolution which Mrs. Major perceives to be impending in our daily lives.

Now at the outset we must confess to doubting not only, and wholly, Mrs. Major's solutions, but even to being sceptical about her problem. At the confidential times, mostly over the tea-cups, when thrilling experiences are interchanged anent the iniquities of men-servants and of maid-servants, we find ourselves generally in the embarrassing position of Canning's needy, but classical, knife-grinder: we have no story to tell. To us has not been revealed what Mrs. Major declares to be clear to all heads of households, the knowledge, namely, that we are on the brink of a revolution, owing to the impossibility of finding female servants. Little difficulty have we ever found in getting servants, and none at all in keeping them; and our

establishment is of the modest and middle-class sort under review, consisting (in facts, if not in theories, it is well to be exact) of four female servants who have plenty of work and moderate wages. Let us hope that this experience, one stretching now to some thirty years and into the second generation of a happy similar experience, may give us the right of criticising Mrs. Major's melancholy problem, and of suggesting other than her somewhat comic solutions.

Mrs. Major's panaceas are certainly of a revolutionary sort, and most startling perhaps is her calm proposal for the abolition of "the elaborate meal known as late dinner." It will not in future be possible, thinks this ardent reformer, who seems less regardful of husbands and of incomes than of cooks, to have two dinners a day cooked in the same house; in towns one of these meals will have to be taken at a restaurant. "No people," she continues, rising almost into poetry (it certainly transcends any reasonable prose interpretation) "no people who call themselves educated will ever consent to choose an occupation which entails spending their lives, day after day, in washing up dishes at a scullery sink." Surely this is a somewhat fanciful description of a middle-class cook or even of a kitchen-maid! We seem to recall a more cheery view of the profession. "Cookery," says Ruskin, "means much tasting and no wasting; it means carefulness and inventiveness and watchfulness and willingness and readiness of appliance; it means the economy of your great-grandmothers

and the science of modern chemists ; it means English thoroughness, and French art, and Arabian hospitality." The everyday truth in everyday households may hover between these two ideals, but undoubtedly every cook, even the most common-place, is, in her way, a bit of an artist with a reasonable joy in her art ; and every kitchen-maid is an apprentice to that art with a possible blue ribbon gleaming among the saucepans, and a very real (though not necessarily blue) one adorning her hat. And if in sad fact no fringe is permitted for the bright ribbon to rest on, the "petty jealousy" or the "contemptible tyranny" manifest to Mrs. Major in such and similar rules is assuredly not clear to us. Fringes and furbelows unlimited are by some mothers and mistresses denied to their daughters as well as to their dependants. Neither is it, to us, demonstrated that because "the most difficult servants to find are cooks and kitchen-maids, and the least difficult housemaids" that "therefore it is clear that work that goes on all day and far into the night is less attractive than that which is over tolerably early in the day." Is all work, save the cook's, over early in the day ? What then of the baths and the bed-rooms, the lamps and the waiting at table and the washing up of silver and glass ? And at the worst, it is well to remember that it is not a case of always and uninterrupted washing-up of dishes at the scullery-sink. If it be permitted to us also to rise into poetry, we would urge that

No one is so accursed by fate,  
No one so utterly desolate,  
But some heart, though unknown,  
Responds unto his own,

and occasionally asks him, the master at least, out to dinner when the

mistress's washing-up requirements would probably be limited to an egg-cup or so. Does not the reason of the extra difficulty, in so far as it exists, lie rather in the fact that skilled labour is always comparatively rare ? Cooks are not so fortunate as poets in being born, and it is a matter of elementary knowledge that of the consequently necessary making cooks take far more than housemaids. Three months of training may inform an intelligent girl how to dust a room and how to keep her hands off her master's papers ; but the like number of years, added to the intelligence, will hardly produce a tolerable sauce.

It is not only our dinners, however, that Mrs. Major would abolish, but the nick-nacks in our drawing-rooms, and the "unnecessary silver" on our side-boards, to save the dusting, the cleaning, and the polishing. Now, in so far as such civilised adjuncts to the scullery-sink are, as Mrs. Major declares them to be, "not merely useless, but absolutely senseless,"—and we confess to no great love for the modern travesty of museums which we find in some drawing-rooms—by all means let them go ; and, with a pang certainly, but yet contentedly, sooner than see it tarnished, we might even consent, as exhorted, to substitute glass or earthenware for every bit of our cherished silver, except spoons and forks. But, is such heroism really called for ? Even the small establishments which make a brave display of metal under the name of plate, as Mrs. Major somewhat contemptuously puts it, need not, we would submit, make their side-boards bare and reduce their drawing-rooms to six chairs and a sofa *en suite*, so long as they own a daughter, and that daughter owns a bicycle. For the energy which uses so willingly the rag and the oil-can, might surely be diverted occasionally to the

dusting-brush and the plate-leather, and so save that part of the situation; although, in our experience, the silver and the nick-nacks are no stumbling-blocks, servants finding in the care of the pretty things and in the management of the flowers a relief to the monotony of the work which Mrs. Major elsewhere complains of. A peril to our pockets is likewise insisted upon. "The question of expense," says Mrs. Major, "will also very soon become a serious matter. . . . we shall have to pay from £35 to £50 a year for any trained servant." But as some set off to any special fears on this head, we seem to have heard that the rate of wages in all classes, from the agricultural labourer upwards, has considerably increased in the last twenty years. And soothing statistical echoes seem to have followed concerning a considerable cheapening of clothes, and of, perhaps, sugar, and some other things which are supposed to have set the balance straight again, and which at least suggest a possibility of "saving in something else." But all this seems a matter for experts to make long, contradictory, and convincing rows of figures about, and is at any rate quite beyond the powers of the present writer. That money, however, is not the only, nor perhaps always the first consideration with servants, that tact and kindness (to say nothing of regularly paid wages) reckon with them as make-weights against hard work and "monotony," she ventures respectfully to offer to Mrs. Major as a fact gleaned from her own modest experience of house-keeping.

The "monotony of the work," and "the want of stated hours and days which each individual can employ as she likes," give yet other occasion for Mrs. Major's misplaced and mischievous sympathy. Now, except that the hours are not fixed, and from

the nature of the case cannot be, the servants in every properly regulated house have fully as many hours at their disposal as have girls in a shop or a factory. Many mistresses give to each one of their servants once a year a week or a fortnight's holiday: some invite a servant's young sister or old mother to spend a few days to see the sights in town; and in all establishments the alternate Sunday out, with an evening at least once a week, is an institution. Often, too, comes the pleasure of the unexpected in the form of extra leisure when the family, or some members of it, dine out, or leave town on a few days' visit.

As regards the monotony, is not all work monotonous, if we choose to call it by that name instead of regular? The ordering of dinners equally with the cooking of them, (and some masters of households will say with the eating of them) is monotonous. We know a lady who says that the imagination which has gone to the composition of *menus* might have produced novels. We know that family, and we have eaten those dinners, and in adding up results, so many undoubtedly good meals against so many problematically good novels, we are decidedly of opinion that those unwritten masterpieces are not to be regretted.

And, monotony for monotony, is even the every day "washing up of dishes at a scullery-sink" a worse task, or a more wearisome one, than the everyday feeding of a machine, or the rolling of cigarettes, or the standing for long hours behind a counter? One instance at least is known to the writer where the prospect of any such promotion utterly failed to fire ambition. The tempted one was a parlour-maid of a particularly superior sort, whose talents a modern reformer considered were liter-

ally hidden under a napkin. With the mistress's permission, a situation of the well-paid assistant-class was offered to this young woman, and, "No, I thank you, Madam, I prefer this intellectual atmosphere," was the very startling answer which that well-intentioned lady received. Except that one member of the family wrote extremely minor verse, the atmosphere in which this appreciative parlour-maid waited was by no means remarkably intellectual; and yet, if we come to think of it, save for the phrasing, which she may have caught from the poet, there was nothing really to startle one, or indeed very surprising, in the reply. To any ordinary young person of the class from which servants are recruited the protected life and refined ways in a well-arranged and cultivated household must surely be an experience as pleasant as it is new; and the rules which guard its safety and its strangeness can be no more tiresome to such a young woman than are the rules which obtain in every place,—office, shop, ship, or barracks—which "the young men of her circle," to borrow Mrs. Major's phrase, obey without a grumble. To many rules and regulations does Mrs. Major take exception, but she finds "a sort of insult to the women" in what she says is in many houses a fixed rule that no servant should go out without special permission; and such a rule, she adds, "could only mean that she was not considered fit to be trusted out by herself." We utterly fail to see the fact, the inference, or the hardship. An intimation to the head of a household when any member of it is likely to be out for some hours, in some cases a civil request for leave of absence, is, we take it, a usual courtesy, whether such member be a servant or merely son, daughter, or guest. Does a clerk go out of the office

without a word to his chief, or an assistant leave the shop, or a soldier the barracks, or a sailor his ship? And where is the tyranny, the "contemptible tyranny" to be exact, more evident in requiring women servants to dress neatly, to wear the pretty costume, or livery, if you like to call it so, of white cap and apron, than in requiring hall-porters, railway-porters, not to speak of courtiers and hospital-nurses, after their fashion, to do the like? "The obligatory wearing of caps is more deeply resented," says Mrs. Major, "than most employers perhaps realise." But as a matter of fact, the cap and apron, "*the badge of the slavey*," (Mrs. Major gives it the pathos of italics) is worn by the "young ladies" of the restaurant, and by them, seemingly, is not resented. These latter have, it is true, the distinction and compensation of the coveted prefix; but is it not conceivable that addressing the inmates of our households less formally may be a result of the familiarity and friendship which such nearer relations naturally induce, rather than a sign of the "social inferiority" which Mrs. Major discovers and denounces in it?

"Only the girls who are too badly educated for other employments will go out as servants," says this dangerous advocate. It is possible for even authorities to differ a little over what should be understood by the phrase "badly educated;" but probably in the sense in which Mrs. Major unwittingly uses the phrase her contention is true. Over-taught and under-educated folks (which synonym perhaps may serve for "badly-educated") mistake their capabilities for a good many callings. "We have practically succeeded hitherto," says Mrs. Major, "in keeping a certain proportion of our countrywomen in a state of quasi-slavery." And if this scolding does not convert

us to better ways, a "lesson that will be in every way an advantage to the community," a lesson that it might be unkind to call obvious, follows. "Though wealth," continues our Mentor, "gives a larger purchasing power, it does not justify its possessors in any interference with the privileges and happiness of their less wealthy fellow-citizens." And that's true too, as Gloucester says about another matter, yet we remain unmoved; no "lesson" can we discern, no "advantage" can we discover, in exaggeration or in platitude. As sober serious fact, all life is service, and the lamented "want of leisure to employ as one likes," is most certainly not a want limited to the class of female servants. Neither can we see that this especial form of service could be in the smallest degree lightened by turning it into French, and calling servants "*house employées*." Each of us, in our degree, contributes to the social fabric; if this desk of ours were not dusted, we could not write at it; and if his bed were not made and his breakfast not ready for him, the Prime Minister himself could not do his work. The loving service of domestic servants is as essential to the general well-being of the State as is that of the soldier or the sailor, and a wise discipline of rules and regulations is as needful to maintain it.

"The result of universal education," says Mrs. Major, "is clearly to produce a feeling of equality." It may be; it would be only one of the results which universal education, of the Tom Folio sort, has to answer for. "A universal scholar," was Tom Folio, according to Addison "so far as the title-page of all authors." A good many of the universally educated in these days, one fears, would answer to that description of scholarship, and, more's the pity, claim "equality" on the strength of it. To our mind,

claim, grant, and grounds for it are all alike false. There is no such thing as equality in that odious and untruthful form of pretence that every one is as good as every one else. It is just the inequalities in character and circumstance that give opportunity for each one of us to be helpful to the other. Servants are essential parts of every household, and that the work of all,—brain-work, hand-work, and state-craft—may go on smoothly, servants, equally with master and with mistress, must do their share of the work at stated times and with due discipline. Calling our cooks and housemaids "young ladies," remitting the discipline and reforming the dress, will not further these ends; but showing them how their neat, deft, efficient service helps to great issues may do so. One lady of our acquaintance never allows her servants to wait at table, and another, carrying the folly to a more severe sequence, has them to dine with her when she is alone. The latter plan is perhaps the more logical, and succeeds better in making servants and mistress alike uncomfortable; but both ladies equally degrade the ideal and the practice of service, which, do what we will, is universal, and, do what we can, is inspiring.

For in truth, the difficulty is not one for heroic remedies; and the solution of Mrs. Major's problem is, like so many other solutions, so simple that it is apt to be overlooked. It is decidedly a case for treatment by the small streams that flow unnoticed at our feet, rather than for desperate plunges into big and distant rivers. We are not, in sober fact, called upon to give up our dinners, to denude our drawing-rooms of their nick-nacks and our sideboards of their silver, still less to contemplate having one's entire household suddenly composed of Chinese or Indians. To avert the



very beginning of such a revolution it is only necessary that *Mesdames les maitresses le commencent*.

Of a verity, none of the evils enumerated by Mrs. Major, no one of the troubles in getting servants, no one of the troubles in keeping them, exists, where the mistress of the house understands her share in the duties thereof. It is the mistress, far more often than her servant, who is incompetent, and who lacks the preparatory training. Gracious household ways is a homely lore which High Schools do not teach, and which Colleges stifle. Eyes lifted from a book to strain on a bicycle, are not the sort of eyes on which a maiden pleasantly or profitably waits. The woman who looks well to the ways of her household, looks neither wearily nor worryingly, neither spasmodically nor microscopically. Neither can the mistress who, to parody a famous phrase, "gives up to a platform what was meant for the hearth" fairly expect to be equally effective in both departments. That eloquent sort, however intense their perorations on the subject of service, will never keep servants and rarely engage the right ones. The very finest of theories imply the possession of brains, and by the time the theories (there are so many of them nowadays and all first-rate) have all been assimilated, sorted, and sent out in circulars, the brains of the gifted speakers and the enthusiastic listeners alike must be a little too tired and too irritable to apply the theories judiciously at home. These energetic ladies seem sometimes to lack the sense of perspective; the needs of the near are lost in the dues of the far, and the little things which really matter flit away in their rapt contemplation of the big things that do not. For the laws of health and

of economics, if our modern women would only believe it, do not depend upon their speeches or even upon their pamphlets, but very much indeed upon the quiet unhasting, un-resting, every day supervision by every mistress of her own household. No mistress endowed with mother-wit, which is worth a good many competitive degrees in wisdom, expects perfection, even though she may have to pay from £35 to £50 a year for it. She distrusts even her own perfectness, and while she cultivates on some occasions a little deafness and blindness, on others she stimulates her perceptions. She knows not only if the chimney smokes, but if the lover does; which as a joke perhaps is feeble, but, as a suggestive factor in the situation, very strong indeed. Mrs. Major thinks that wherever practicable a system of allowance should be adopted for over-time, and of board-wages as "tending to reduce friction." With that same object some practically-minded mistresses of our acquaintance have introduced a rather different sort of allowance, the unwritten rule that every servant should be allowed an occasional temper. It may be a lover, or it may be a liver, or lumbago, or just a fit of the blues that makes the quick step lagging, the deft hand awkward, the polite response lacking; why should it not pass without reproof, or with a kind enquiry, perhaps, later on? It does seem a little inadequate, we are conscious of it, as a solution to so terrifying a problem; but nevertheless our experience and our conscience compel us to the endorsing of Lewis Carroll's opinion, that "a little kindness, and putting her hair in papers, would do wonders."

A GRANDMOTHER.

## SOCIAL LIFE IN ITALY.

ALMOST everything that was written a generation ago of Italian life in general may be looked on as ancient history, for hardly a single fact recorded at that time would apply to the conditions to-day. The prince, the patrician, the priest, and the peasant are now, as then, with an occasional excursion into the land of the artist or the anarchist, the favourite subjects of writers and travellers, while of the great middle class which sprang into being with the fall of the Temporal Power, little is said and less is known, although it is in their hands that the future of the country lies.

Before 1870 a Doria, a Borghese, or the head of any other great House, would have looked askance at the idea that any member of his family should take to wife an alien either in blood or religion. An alliance might be contracted with some old French or Austrian family, though it was rare; but of non-Catholic brides there were none. Now nearly half the coronets of Rome are, or will shortly be, worn by American heiresses, of whom few, if any, were Romanists at the time of their betrothal. An American wife or an American mother in the house means that the days spent in Paris or in London will be many, and that when country air or sea-breezes are desired, they will be sought on the Riviera and not in the crag-perched castles of Perugia or the sunny stretches of Lombardy. Even had these numerous inter-marriages not taken place, it is probable that the results would have

been the same; for the wave of speculation that has of late years swept the peninsula from the Cottian Alps to Cape Passaro, the emigration which has sent Italy's best blood across the ocean, the conscription which has transferred the Pisan vine-grower to the scoræ-covered plains round Mount Etna, and the terrible taxation which has turned the brilliant smile of Italy into a scowl, seem to have raised barriers between prince and peasant which can never be lowered, and killed the old kindly feeling which formed the main link of the chain that bound the landed proprietor to his estate.

Mr. Marion Crawford, in his tales of Italian life, has too frequently and too brilliantly described the speculation-mania for any other writer to need give it more than a passing remark. Unscrupulous financiers, seeing in the unbusiness-like sons of the Italian aristocracy an easy prey, fired their vivid imaginations by pictures of what those of their own rank and tastes had done in other lands. Building was the favourite form which this speculation took, and, vying in number and extent with classic remains, one saw for years new ruins all over Rome, streets and courts laid out with walls rising only a few feet from their foundations. These are gradually being transformed into the hotels which would already suffice to lodge the whole of travelling Europe, and public offices which would seem able to provide a room a-piece for each official, even if the latter numbered one out of two,

instead of one out of four, of the educated portion of the community.

One of the cruellest blows aimed at the pride and the exclusiveness of the Italian nobles was that which threw their principal palaces, with their wealth of pictures and statuary, open to the public. It was a desecration of the domestic hearth of which the reason is almost incomprehensible; and moreover it missed its mark, for an Italian rarely crosses the portals in question, and it is the English tourist and the German student who almost alone benefit by the measure. The result has been that the older families either abstain from living in the cities at all, or that, when there, they shut themselves up in a corner of their own palaces, or that, leaving the principal family residence to the stranger and the custodian of the family treasures, they migrate to some other residence which was formerly allotted to the use of a younger branch of the House. Their personal interest in their possessions naturally fades under these conditions, and they would gladly accept the offers of foreigners to purchase them. Here too, however, the Government steps in. No work of art must be removed from the country without an official permission, and as this is rarely or never given, and as no foreigner who buys a picture thinks of leaving it in the country, the bargain remains unconcluded. The head of one great princely House, who was in great pecuniary straits, recently promised the Government £20,000 on condition that he was allowed to accept the offer of £100,000 for his pictures and statuary from an art-collector. The Government refused, and things would have looked bad but for the appearance of a beautiful young girl whose dowry was as large as her love of art was keen, and who saved the situation by

accepting the hand and heart of the troubled prince, and thereby saved his picture-galleries at the same time.

Music, however, is the only art which seems to appeal to any great degree to the modern Italian. In painting his interest, always of course with exceptions, is slight, and in literature it would seem to be almost non-existent. Literary criticism is the last thing you would look for in an Italian newspaper. The works on travel and science are often good, but are read little save by travellers and men of science; expositions on the disinterred treasures of the country find but a very small audience; the popular fiction is chiefly French with a sprinkling of English, while the splendid old libraries which exist here and there seem to contain no books to read. There are glorious missals from the Middle Ages, black-letter volumes, palimpsests quaint and curious, manuscripts in multitudes, and scrolls enclosed in cylinders which would make a bibliopolist die of envy. The courtly owner of the collection will take these out with evident pride and submit them to your inspection; but he would not think of reading them, and his astonishment is extreme when you express a wish to stay awhile in the library for that purpose. The exceptions to this rule would be found to be those who had travelled much in youth, or who had been educated by an abnormal English tutor, one who had not, as is their wont, contented himself with teaching his pupils merely to speak his language with facility, and to write a casual note with ease and elegance. The Italians of the upper class are as a rule excellent linguists, and, as they themselves say, they "can even make English sometimes." "French,

Spanish, Russian, that is easy," they will add; "but English—" and then, with a graceful shrug of the shoulders and a deprecating play of the hands that removes all touch of discourtesy from their speech, they go on to explain that they are constrained at least to attempt to study English as, "So many of you come to our country now, and when you speak our language, ah, how it flays our ears!"

Fencing, hunting, and pigeon-shooting are the favourite sports of the Italians of the upper class, while gambling is their besetting sin. With the foils they are almost unrivalled, though their system differs from that of other countries, and a regrettable consequence of this proficiency is that duels, from the most trivial of causes, which often end fatally, are frequent. A challenge to some member of a foreign Embassy was at one time a common occurrence, but as many of the corps have followed the example of the British Government and declared that any man who fights a duel must leave the Diplomatic Service, these challenges have practically ceased. Excellent fencers as are the Italians, if they ride at all, they are still better horsemen. When Buffalo Bill took his cowboys to Rome some ten years ago, a bevy of gentlemen from the north challenged him and his to mount their untrained ponies. "If the ponies can be ridden," was the answer, "we can ride them;" but when the contest came off it was adjudged that the Italians had not lost their wager.

The Roman hunt is a popular feature of life on the Tiber though far less so than before 1870, partly on account of the influx of foreigners and partly because the Court and Clerical factions refuse to mingle in any form of amusement; and the horses which the Duke of the

Abbruzzi and his staff bring over from Ireland each year, turn their heads on landing to the cavalry barracks and not to the Campagna, as was once the case. The young exquisites of Rome, Turin, and the rest, invariably spend three or four afternoons in the week in pigeon-shooting, while on their own estates they indulge in the same recreation in a more exciting form.

It may be remarked incidentally that the Italian officers are among the best educated men in Europe. There is a precision and at the same time a breadth about their mode of study that proves them to represent the best order of the Italian mind, which is eminently scientific, and has a predilection for all the exact sciences. Exaggerated as the statement may seem, the upper class in Italy makes each of its sons an officer in the army or the navy. Conscription in any case compels them to enter it for a time, and the fact that the military profession is the only one open to him, constrains every young man of energy and ambition to remain in it. The Diplomatic Service accounts for a few, the care of their own landed estates for others, but the rest must be either soldiers or idlers. The law is not considered suited to the dignity of a gentleman, still less is the medical profession; and it is a fact which is not to the credit of the country that a doctor and his family are not considered eligible for presentation at the Italian Court, although it was a medical man who, to the end of his life, was the most valued friend of King Humbert.

Until 1870 any family which had three or more sons, dedicated one among them to the Church, either as monk or priest, and writers of the time describe the priest who was a man of good family as the most polished gentleman and most intel-

lectual companion in the country. Now, however, the restrictions on the clergy are so many that the Italian sees little to compensate his son for enforced celibacy and separation from the world, while the Abolition Act will generally force the young monk to seek a monastery abroad. The income, too, is a difficulty, as the priest is debarred from earning money on his own account, and remunerative offices in the Church have ceased to exist, while the difficulty of providing for younger sons increases every year. An exception to this remark must be made in the case of the Jesuits, who continue to be one of the wealthiest sections of the community, especially since the holy fathers have engaged in commercial investments; mines, banking-houses, and lines of steamers are all directions to which they have turned their attention successfully, and it is rarely that a young man of parts fails to find a career open to him when he leaves that powerful institution, the Jesuit College in Rome.

The fact that the nobility, the professional, and the commercial classes have ceased to dedicate their sons to the priesthood, brings one face to face with the same problem which exists nearer home. From a practical point of view, and as regards daily existence, the fact that the priest should be the son of a peasant answers very well. A sum of money was paid over with him when he was placed in the hands of the Church. His needs are few, for he is still a peasant, and are supplied by the gifts of fruit, oil, and corn from his flock, the surplus going to provide his other simple wants. The costs of his education at the local seminary are small; when he becomes a priest he lives rent-free, and there is always some old woman in the

village who will gladly perform the duties of housekeeper in return for the shelter of his roof. He will generally undertake the cultivation of his garden himself, possibly that of a vineyard or olive-orchard as well, and for the rougher work he can always count on assistance, while he has the satisfaction of knowing that, even from a temporal point of view, he at least does as much for those around him as they do for him. Shrewd, prudent, and both by training and inculcation by no means devoid of worldly wisdom, he has a chance of becoming a man of mark in the village. He chooses the name of the little son before he is carried to the font, and arranges the marriage of the comely daughter of the house. He makes up the accounts for the steward, and corresponds with the emigration agent as to sending one of the lithe and active young sons to the Argentine Republic. He settles the dispute that was ravaging the lives of Antonio and Antonino, and probably prevents one or both of these impetuous and hot-blooded members of his flock from going to the galleys. In a word, he is indispensable, and the question if it be advisable that the guide and preceptor of the *commune* should be of the same intellectual and social status as the people themselves, need not be answered here.

The direct result of over-taxation in Italy is emigration. The cream of the nation flows across the ocean as unceasingly here as it does with ourselves, though the cause is widely different. Brazil, the Argentine, and the Southern States of North America, are the favourite goals, and there is a colony of Italians thirty thousand strong in New Orleans alone, while it is said that between four and five thousand emigrants will leave Sicily in one year after a bad harvest and, incredible as it may seem, some of the

Veloce boats from Genoa will take over two thousand at a time. For the most part they cross in steamers or in the orange-boats which file out in quick succession throughout the season of the fruit. Unless in the case of criminals flying from the law, there are few cases of stowaways, for the Italian, as energetic in the present day as his fathers, the *lazzaroni*, were indolent, expects to have to work his way through life and does it. He is a fair sailor, quick at the ropes, and manages to steer vessels across the Atlantic that an Englishman would say could hardly live a day beyond port. The fruit-trade with America doubles itself every few years, and there are few families of Southern Italy who have not seen one of their members depart for the Western Hemisphere; and sail when he will, the skipper need never fear to be without unpaid labour for his transit in the form of the active, cheery, brown-limbed sons of the South.

But though the Italian of the lower orders loves to wander, he loves still more to return home, and many of them hold it a crime to spend their earnings elsewhere than in their own country. They work incessantly, they live sparingly; and then, if their venture has taken the form of monkeys and chestnuts, they tramp back to Italy, barrel-organ or cooking-stove on shoulder, that more money may be made on the way. If the further side of the ocean were the original goal, they return as they came, either in the steerage or the engine-room. Arrived at home, they will buy a share in a vineyard or an olive-orchard, greet their family all round, and probably set out again a few months later, accompanied by the young son or brother who has shot up from a child to a tall stripling, with a pair of useful hands, since the traveller left him.

If things have gone very badly in the

old country, some *Æneas* will take his whole family with him, the infant in its swaddling-bands and at times the great-grandfather on his crutches; for the Italian is nothing if not patriarchal and he would rightly judge it as great a crime to leave one of the old sorrowing in loneliness behind, as to strike his stiletto into the breast of the stranger who has no claim upon him. Stabbing, however, it may be remarked in parenthesis, is no longer such a favourite form of expression of disapproval as was formerly the case; a young Neapolitan sailor once hit the mark when he said to me, "It is not respectable any more." That was a healthy exposition of public opinion. Assassination is no longer respectable; therefore all but the dregs of the population allow the dagger to remain in the girdle. It will not be in this generation nor the next, however, that the said dagger will ever be left at home; the hand and the hilt have been wedded too long for a divorce to be lightly accepted.

To return to the emigrant. It is not only the *contadino* on the orange-boat who goes now to the other side. The middle class has its merchants, its manufacturers, and its ship-owners there; and each decade the sons and nephews of these successful traders appear more content than the last to remain permanently in their adopted country, looking on Italy as a land to visit or to talk of only. There is an ebb in the tide of emigration occasionally, as when that savage and senseless revenge was enacted on the Italian colony of New Orleans after the assassination of Mr. Hennessy in 1891, or after some unusually acute financial crisis in Brazil or the Argentine; but those things right themselves in time, and the stream flows only the more steadily the following season in consequence of the break in the last.



In justice to Italy it must be said that the perpetrators of those terrible crimes which have of late paralysed the civilised world, must be by no means taken as representative even of the dregs of the Peninsula. Italian law has done more to stamp out crime in the last thirty years than has that of any other country, and it is in consequence of its fierce pursuit that the malefactor strives so earnestly to set the sea between himself and the disturbers of his peace. But here again he is in a dilemma, for nowhere is the guardian of the law so vigilant as at the port. A passport and a clean police-sheet are demanded from each one who leaves it; his destination and his plan for future maintenance are ascertained before he may cross the gangway. Well would it be for our own country if a scrutiny as careful were exercised over those wanderers who propose to spend the remainder of their too-often tainted existence on our shores.

Here and there the supple form of a malefactor, assisted by some Camorrist for whose help heavy fees must be paid, will insert itself among the cargo, trusting for sustenance to the kindness of some compatriot among the passengers; but the members of the *Mala Vita* who trouble the New World with their presence are, according to police-records, far smaller in number than is generally supposed. As to the general diminution of crime in the Peninsula, it is satisfactory to note that from 1879 to 1889 the murders were 3,291: in the next decade they sank to 2,611; and the decrease from that date onward has been steadily maintained. The *ergastolo*, or solitary confinement on some sea-bound rock, which now punishes murder and incendiarism, is a fate dreaded far more than death by the Italian, and his soul shrinks from the idea of seven years' confinement in a

solitary cell, followed by a life of silence the hours of work being the only time in which he may turn his eyes even on the faces of his fellow-sufferers.

Conscription has indirectly given a great impetus to emigration. It is not that the subject is allowed by its means to avoid his military training, for even the criminal is less rigidly pursued than he who would avoid his service in the ranks, but that the stride which takes him beyond the village having once been made, the awe and fear with which ignorance hitherto regarded the outer world is dissipated, his curiosity is excited, his ambitions roused, and any opportunity offered of extending the knowledge of the outer world and improving the circumstances is seized. Conscription is in many ways a boon in disguise, and has done more than anything to palliate the failings of the Italians. Regularity, punctuality, obedience, and self-control are all attributes in which he is by nature eminently lacking; his lapses in these directions are corrected by military training, his physique and his health are improved, and he is sent back home in every way a better man than when he came. He must learn more-over to read and write; and if his education has been so far accomplished in his village *commune*, he has an opportunity of extending his studies, as great encouragement is given by the officers to those who are able to join the advanced classes.

The old days when a living could be made by lying at full length on the quays below Saint Elmo, waiting for the *soldi* which rained down all the year round, are gone for ever, and the lament of no romancist and no versifier can bring them back. The Italian is none the worse off because he has learned to work, because he has learned to think, and because

he will in the future learn how to pay his taxes (modified as it is to be hoped they will be ere long) and yet retain enough of his wage to enable him to live with more comfort and ease than he does now. The modern Italian respects the law, fears the law, and appreciates the peace which he enjoys under the law, none of which statements could have been made when he was under the sway of either Pope or Bourbon.

When shorn of the glamour lent by romance, the career of the modern brigand and his brother of the city, the Camorrist, will be found to be sordid in the extreme. Each age has its own outlaw, and fifty years ago the ranks of the banditti often included cadets of many of the leading families of the peninsula. To offend the Church was then easy: the arm of the Papal authorities was long; and to take to the hills was often a necessity for the headstrong youth who was too proud or too wilful to accept the pardon which was offered under conditions that he judged too hard. He may have criticised some prince of the Church too freely, or he may have carried off as his bride some young girl destined for the cloister. He may only have omitted to make his confession at the seasons prescribed by the Church; before 1870 the strong arm of the muscular monk would make itself felt by those rebel sons among the lower orders who were inclined to forget the way to the confessional, while the pressure of another kind which was brought to bear on a patrician routineer was as great. Any of these misdemeanours would make him a bad son of the Church, and did he not duly repent and make atonement, he might be constrained to fly to the hills.

Refugees from the tyranny of the State also were numerous. The eye

of justice does not always see clear, and to know that some innocent man has been condemned makes one chary of submitting one's own fate to the same tribunal; while Austrian Archduke and Bourbon Prince, alien rulers in an unfriendly land, could not afford to enquire too closely into the guilt of a prisoner who had long been known as restless and reactionary. Sometimes a good-natured ruler would give orders that the culprit, if in flight, should not be pursued too closely. It was a pity such a fine young fellow should go to the galleys; his House was powerful too and might give trouble. Let him go to the hills, where he would inconvenience no one; a brigand more or less made little odds. Once with the banditti, no return to civilised life was possible; his comrades on the one side, and the law on the other would see to that. Like must to like, and be sure if one gallant young spirit, who had sinned perhaps through the exuberance of youth only, was missing from his place, his brother or friend would not rest till he had gained speech with him in some dark nook beyond the city wall. Then the desire of the one to retain some vestige of his old life, and the desire of the other to learn more of the wild free existence of the hills, would often result in two treading the downward path where only one had stepped before.

The brigand of to-day is little better than a foot-pad, and the Camorrist is somewhat of a cur. If he be a leader, he does his deeds by deputy, saving his own skin for years; and if he be a follower, he is generally a ruffian to whom a stab more or less is immaterial.

Any sentimental interest one may have had in the association fades when one learns that among the regular acts of retribution in the

case of a woman who offends a Camorrist, is that of wounding her in different parts of the face, and painting the scars so that they can never be effaced by time. Another favourite practice is to lurk near the quays, and after inveigling some intending emigrant into a neighbouring den, to rob him of his passage-money or the little store of home-made bread and wine he has brought with him for the voyage. After a few experiences such as these, even the most undisciplined of young Sicilians, with more Arab blood than Latin in his veins, begins to think that there is something in law and order after all. The police too, the Mafia and the Camorra complain, are not what they used to be. They are so clever now that they can always lay hands on the man who writes such legends on the wall as *Death to him who prates*, *Vengeance on him who points a finger*, and the like. They are such good marksmen too, just as likely to hit you, as you make your way among the rocks, as you are to hit them; and they always aim at your legs, the cowards, and this means capture; then follow the bickering and jugglery which they call a trial, and the *ergastolo*, all in turn. Their manners are so ingratiating too, that they can always find some one weak, needy, or simple enough to play the traitor, knowingly or unknowingly; and that makes it uncomfortable for the rest, for one discovered makes a score suspected, and it takes a good many victims to make up that score. Moreover they have grown reckless to a degree which is imbecile, considering the warnings they have had. No sooner has one been put out of the way than another, as acute, as impervious to bribery, and as heedless of his life as the last, springs up. Finally, with a flight to right and left of his expressive fingers, the

philosopher decides that in these days honesty is the best policy, and goes off to play *morra* on the quay.

It would not be fitting that any note should be written on Italy during the present year without a personal reference to her murdered King.

The cry of Queen Margherita that the assassination of her husband was the greatest crime of the century, ran little short of the truth. In striking him, the miscreant struck the best friend the country had. Humbert made the most of his opportunities, and these were few; he let his possibilities of usefulness be interfered with as little as might be by the limitations of his position, and these were many. He was a good man and a good king; and though it may seem a paradox to say it, had he been a better king he would have done more harm. Italy's most pressing need is a good minister of finance, but no country looks for that upon its throne. Excessive taxation is the tyrant under whose heel Italy crouches; taxation which makes the peasant hide his hens in his cellar that he may now and again eat an egg on which no duty has been paid; which makes the vine-grower of Sorrento watch his wine dry up in its goat-skins because the duty will not let him carry it across the bay to Naples.

The King, generous, impulsive, and admittedly stronger of heart than of head, as are so many of his race, brought forward one promising scheme after another for easing the burden of this taxation for his people. His ministers declared each scheme impracticable in turn; but they had no better to propose, and for want of a better, one man out of two in the peninsula goes through his existence with half of all that means life crushed out of him. The Italian peasant wants little, very little, but he does not get it; and his King went through his

days sorrowing that it was so. Failing to lighten the load of universal misery, Humbert set himself to relieve individual cases, and for a sovereign, even a constitutional sovereign, to see himself thus limited is hard. To desire to remove the mountain and to find your powers hardly suffice for the displacement of the mole-hill, makes a purgatory of life; and to spend one half of your day in a palace which you loathe, and the other in helping an ague-stricken goat-herd to drain a stagnant pool or plant a patch with eucalyptus that he may beat off the attacks of the fever-fiend, makes your own thralldom hard to bear.

The Cabinet of a modern monarch is always mildly indulgent towards its nominal head, but it is possible that some of Humbert's plans merited more than a word of gentle toleration before being set aside. He who was always in the open when he had the power to leave stone walls behind him, knew his people and their needs as his town-bred councillors never could; but his knowledge availed little, for in Italy the city rules and the country submits, the city sins and the country suffers, the city says that this poverty-stricken realm, starved by unnumbered centuries of neglect and oppression, shall brave it with the best of the Great Powers, and the country bows its patient shoulders meekly as it has always bowed them, and adds to its existing burden one which is greater than it can bear.

Who should know the Italians of the lower orders if their King did not? He has spent nights by the side of their couch in the horrible

underground dens of Naples in the year of the cholera. He has drawn them gently and kindly, as though his hands were those of a woman, from under the wedged stones and rubble of earthquake-shaken Ischia. He has ridden far and wide over the Campagna to points so distant, and where the ignorance was so deep, that his very name and standing would be unknown were it not that the ubiquitous recruiting-sergeant had passed that way and drawn one man forth to learn something of the outer world, while he thrust another back to impart a little of the knowledge he had gleaned during his life in barracks. Again, on his way up to the peaks which he and the chamois alone know, the King has added a gold piece from his wallet to the payment due for his bowl of milk, that the host might be able to hand in his tax for half a year at least without feeling crippled in every direction where his simple necessities might turn.

All Humbert's ancestors had done these things; he was only following in the path which heredity marked out, but there his following in the wake of his sires ceased. The Princes of Savoy have always been proud of the fact that they lived with their people, but for them that living meant lying in common round the camp-fire, hunting, feasting, fighting together,—all that Humbert would have taken to so kindly had he but lived in an age when constitutional monarchs were unknown.

C. S.

## THE RANEE AND THE FORTUNE-TELLER.

THERE was a reception at the palace, in the *zenana*. The Prime-Minister's two wives were bidden, and the wives and mothers and daughters of all the other counsellors and ministers and officials of the Rajah's mimic court.

The Ranee, in her rare gala dress, stood upon the *guddi*;<sup>1</sup> a little, slender, fragile woman with great melancholy dark eyes, and raven hair parted in smooth and shining bands. Her cheeks were delicately tinted with a rosy flush, her full lips stained scarlet, and her little even teeth perfectly blacked with charcoal; her many-coloured silken skirt, fifty yards wide and weighted with rich embroideries, hung in voluminous folds about her feet, half concealing the heavy golden anklets; upon her bare brown arms were many bangles of gold and tinsel and coloured glass; her little pink silk jacket was open low upon her breast, under the jewelled necklaces that hung from throat to waist; a pale pink *saree*,<sup>2</sup> bordered with flowery silken embroideries, covered her dark head and floated like a delicate cloud about her.

She stood while her guests came in one by one, and paused a moment on the edge of the *guddi* to raise the right hand to the forehead in the graceful Eastern gesture of greeting. She returned their salute in silence with a wave of her tiny hand; and silently the guests ranged themselves

against the walls, sitting on the floor with legs crossed. Then her women came in, bearing little silver trays, the first with cotton-wool dipped in sandal-oil, very sweet-smelling, which the ladies touched with their fingertips, as it was held before them; others had little bundles of betel-leaves and nuts, folded up with cardamoms and spices and pinned together with cloves. For the lady herself there were some specially prepared, with tobacco added to the spices.

The guests made no conversation among themselves, but from time to time the Ranee, addressing one by name, asked a question or made a remark, to which the lady addressed replied briefly. When each one in the circle had been thus recognised, the Ranee made a sign with her hand, and four dancing-girls, with little tambourines in their hands, came in and danced before her, in slow, waving, mazy figures, while one of the women drummed with her palms upon the *tom-tom*, and sang an Indian melody in a low minor key.

The guests chewed their betel with impassive faces; the Ranee leaned back listlessly on her cushions, flashing now and again a swift glance of suspicion upon one or other of that silent and respectful audience.

Presently one of the women standing outside in the verandah came in noiselessly and sat down at the edge of the *guddi*.

"The fortune-teller is waiting outside, *Huzoor*," she whispered.

A gleam shot from the dark eyes of the Ranee, but she did not speak.

The dancers kept up their monoto-

<sup>1</sup> Lit. the throne: a carpet or mattress, with cushions at the end, on which the great personage reclined.

<sup>2</sup> A large scarf, of muslin or silk, wrapped round the body with one end thrown over the head.

nous swaying and intertwining, and waving of arms, their large bare feet shuffling to and fro on the matting; the player's palms were red with drumming on the *tom-tom*.

"*Bus*," said the Ranee. "It is enough; you can go." Then she looked round at the guests seated against the walls. "You have leave to return to your homes," she said. They rose, and saluting as they passed the Ranee, glided out.

She watched them crossing the court in groups, their tongues unloosed, chattering to each other. When the last of them had passed up the steep staircase and through the door of the court she turned to the woman who still sat at the edge of the *guddi*. "Where is the fortune-teller?" she asked.

"She is waiting below at the side door, *Huzoor*."

"Bring her up by the little staircase," said the Ranee; "I will see her."

When the woman returned she was followed by a tall figure clad in the turban, short coat, and muslin drawers worn by the men of the country partly hidden under the voluminous folds of a wide white cloth.

The Ranee laughed the pleased laugh of a child. "Why do you bring a man into the *zenana*, *Piroo-jee-ki-boo*?" she said to her woman.

"It is Fatima Bee, *Huzoor*," the woman answered.

"What would the Rajah say if he saw your turban, Fatima Bee?" the Ranee asked, as the fortune-teller came boldly up to the *guddi*.

"It is better for walking in the country, your Highness," said Fatima Bee with a low salute. "No one speaks or looks at me, when they think I am a man."

Outside the sun shone down with unshadowed glare upon the yellow gravel of the deserted court; the air

quivered in the heat, the long-tailed baboons had left their play-ground on the palace-walls, and were sleeping in some unknown shady fastness of their own; over all was the odorous hush of the Eastern summer. Within, it was dim and cool behind the deep verandahs.

The Ranee drew to the edge of the *guddi*, beside the fortune-teller, and they talked together low and earnestly. Fatima Bee drew out a little dirty book from the pocket of her jacket.

"The Rajah Sahib is become very unloving to me now," the Ranee said looking up with great pathetic eyes. "He hardly ever comes to see me now. Tell me, has he given his love to some other woman? I fear those women of the English *logue* at Simla, where he goes now so often. Their women are shameless creatures who hide themselves not from the eyes of men. He may go into their *zenanas*, and even outside they will talk to him. See, Fatima Bee, if there is a white woman in your book, who has taken my Lord's heart from me."

The fortune-teller turned the pages of her book. "There is no white woman, *Huzoor*," she said soothingly. "I see no other woman in the heart of the Rajah Sahib."

"He was so good to me in the old days, when he loved me," said the Ranee, opening wide the gates of her long reserve to this one woman whom she trusted. "Every day he would come up here and stay for hours; he would send away his men from the *darbar* below, that I might go and sit with him. We played and laughed together like children. We played hide and seek up here, and one day I hid myself on the top of the swing, in the yellow room, right up in the roof. I climbed up by the chains, and he looked for me everywhere, and



could not find me; and at last he looked up and saw me, and he climbed up after me and pulled me down, and he laughed so much, so much, and he kissed me, and we were very happy. I have not changed, Fatima Bee; why does my Lord never care now to play and laugh and be happy?"

The fortune-teller looked at her with eyes that had seen the world and the ways of men outside the *zenana*. "The Rajah Sahib was a boy then, *Huzoor*," she said gently. "He is not a boy now; and men care not for the plays of children. My Lord has many cares; he thinks of his State; he has many things to do to please the English *sahibs*, so that they take not away his State from him, as they took the State of the Soodhara Rajah."

"The *Angresi logue*! The *Angresi logue*!"<sup>1</sup> the Ranee repeated dreamily. "He takes their ways, he plays their ball-games, and shoots with their guns; but he plays no more with me. Give me some medicine, Fatima Bee, that I may make the Rajah Sahib drink and love me and be young again as he was in the years that are gone."

"I have no medicine, *Huzoor*. What do I know? I am only a very poor woman, your Highness," said the fortune-teller. Somewhere in the vague depths of her mind there floated a dim idea that as the Rajah was no longer a child it might be better for the Ranee if she too could grow out of childhood; but the idea would not come to the surface nor shape itself into words, so she turned over the leaves of her book and meditated how much the Ranee would give her for a medicine for the Rajah. "I am very poor woman," she repeated; "what do I know?"

The Ranee drew her *saree* over her face, and sat with her head bent. "I

will give you fifty rupees for a medicine," she said at last. "In my mother's house there was a woman who knew how to make such a medicine; I will send a messenger to bring that woman here to me."

"Fifty rupees very little, *Huzoor*. That good, strong medicine costing many rupees to make. There is gold in that medicine, and dust of pearls, and powder of diamonds. I am very poor woman, your Highness."

"Have you got the medicine with you?" asked the Ranee, indifferently, putting back her *saree* carelessly.

The fortune-teller drew a little bottle slowly from her waist-cloth. "I read in my book last moon," she said, "that your Highness would ask her servant for this medicine; and when the messenger came to call me to the palace, I put it in my waist-cloth. It is very good and strong medicine, with dust of pearls and powder of diamonds in it. The precious stones are very dear this year, your Highness." She held the tiny phial up to the light, and the light shone clear and red through it.

The Ranee put out her hand and took it. "How many rupees?" she said. "It is a very small bottle."

"It will make the Rajah Sahib young again, and he will love you and forget the *Angresi logue*. A hundred rupees I have given for it, *Huzoor*," said the fortune-teller and held her breath.

"I will give a hundred rupees," said the Ranee, and she slid the phial into her bosom.

A shadow fell in the doorway opposite. The Rajah stood there; looking up she saw him, but as she looked he turned away. Her women came running across the court to him.

"Who is that man in the Ranee's apartment?" he asked, and his brow was black as thunder.

"There is no man here, your

<sup>1</sup> The English folk.

Highness," the head-woman answered. "Fatima Bee the fortune-teller is with the Ranee Sahib. She has dressed herself in a turban and man's garments, the shameless one! I will tell her your Highness is here."

"Tell her to go," said the Rajah; "I will not go in while she is there." Then he walked away, still frowning heavily, to the little private staircase and returned to his own apartments. He had seen the little phial pass from the hand of the fortune-teller to his wife; and in the heart of the Rajput there lurks ever the undying suspicion of poison. "She will poison me," he said to himself, as he stumbled down the staircase. "She will poison me, so that she may set her son upon the throne."

The head-woman hastened in to the Ranee. "The Rajah Sahib very angry," she said. "Fatima Bee must go at once; his Highness says he will not come inside when she is here. He is very angry that Fatima Bee is dressed in man's clothes. The Rajah Sahib says to me, 'Who is that man in the *zenana*?'"

The Ranee laughed, and felt with her fingers for the phial that lay in her bosom. "You have leave to go, Fatima Bee," she said. "I will send you a present this evening."

"Go and tell the Rajah Sahib the man is gone out of the *zenana*," said the Ranee, and withdrew laughing into an inner room to secrete her precious phial.

Piroojee-ki-boo, going down-stairs, found the Rajah sitting motionless on his divan, with a brow of thunder. "Come near, Piroojee-ki-boo," he said, "and take these words to the Ranee: 'A Rajput comes not into the *zenana* of his wife where strange men have sat.'"

The old woman, who had nursed the Ranee when she was a child, and had followed her as a bride from

her own home among the Northern hills, held out her clasped hands appealingly. "Oh, Rajah Sahib, no man has been into your Highness's *zenana*; it was but a frolic of that evil woman, Fatima Bee, to clothe herself in man's garments. Let me bring Fatima Bee to tell my Lord herself that so it was. She is even now in the court in her accursed men's garments."

The Rajah did not answer.

Then the old woman threw herself on her face before him and clasped his feet. "Oh, my Lord, I pray you come now to the Ranee Sahib; she will explain everything. Let that wicked fortune-teller be cast into prison,—only come, oh, my Lord! I, Piroojee-ki-boo, brought her into the *zenana*; let me be killed, *Huzoor*, for her wickedness."

But the Rajah spurned her with his foot. "Go," he said, "go, and tell my words to the Ranee."

Then the old woman arose and covered her face with her veil and went back to her mistress who sat on the *guddi* in her gala robes and jewels with a smile on her painted face.

"The Rajah Sahib cannot come, *Huzoor*; he is busy now," said the old woman. "Bye-and-bye he will come."

The smile faded from the Ranee's face; her cheeks were ashen grey under their pretty rose-blush, but she drew up her slender neck with a proud gesture. "Go again," she said, "and tell the Rajah Sahib I desire to speak with him."

"The Rajah Sahib sleeps," said the old woman when she came back. "The sentry stands at his door, but would not let me pass. His Highness must not be disturbed."

"Take off my jewels and my dress," said the Ranee. "This skirt is heavy, and I am tired. Bring me

my *chuddah*.<sup>1</sup> She wrapped the *chuddah* round her and covered her head and lay down on the *guddi*. "Let no one come in," she said. "I am tired, and will sleep."

For three days she sent morning and evening to ask the Rajah to come to her, but the Rajah was sleeping, or riding, or sitting in judgment in the great hall of the *darbar*, and her messenger could not see him. For three days the Ranee neither bathed nor prayed nor ate; the black circles widened under her eyes, and she spoke to no one. Her women cursed that wicked sorceress Fatima Bee, and spat on the ground when they named her, and every one in the *zenana* walked softly.

On the fourth day the head-woman came to the Ranee where she sat on the *guddi*, haggard, unwashed, and uncombed, with her dingy old *chuddah* wrapped about her.

"The Rajah Sahib is gone to Simla," said the old woman; "he went at two o'clock this morning."

"Is he gone?" said the Ranee with apathetic indifference.

"He is gone, *Huzoor*," said the head-woman.

"Tell them to bring the hot water for my bath," said the Ranee, and lay down again and covered her face.

"The Rajah Sahib was very angry," said the head-woman in a low voice as she sat by her lady's pillow. They were alone, the other women sat outside in groups, and the low hum of their voices floated in from the verandah.

"Why was he angry?" asked the Ranee in a languid voice, as of one who talks for very idleness.

"His Highness was angry that a man should come into the *zenana*," answered the head-woman.

<sup>1</sup> A sheet or cloth, worn as a mantle by Indian women.

"What man?" said the Ranee.

"That shameless one, Fatima Bee. The Rajah Sahib would not hear me when I told him there was no man, only that wicked sorceress in men's garments."

The Ranee laughed, a little dreary laugh. "The Rajah Sahib is a very clever man," she said, "and he has gone to Simla."

Then she bathed and said her prayers, and they brought her in a tray of food, and she ate, and lay down again with the *chuddah* over her head.

In the stillness of the noontide she called softly to the head-woman who sat alone on the threshold. "Piroojee-ki-boo," she said, "the Rajah Sahib is a very clever man, and I am a dead woman. There is death in my heart, and it burns."

That night it was told in the city below that the little Ranee who had come over the hills a bride, ten years ago, lay dead in the Palace. And those who remembered to mention it told also that one of the Ranee's women had also died that day. It was the one whose turn it was that day to eat the remnants from her lady's table.

In the city they said one to another, "The Rajah Sahib has done well. He saw a man sitting in the *zenana*. He did according to his right. What does it matter? The Rajah Sahib has a son."

None of them ever knew about the little phial of red water that the fortune-teller had given to the Ranee to make her husband love her again as in the old time. When the Rajah came back to the palace he found it in that inner room and threw it out of a high window. Where it fell it made a little crimson splash, like a splash of blood, upon the pavement of the terrace.

## A CENTURY OF FIGHTING.

THERE are probably very few people nowadays who have not tolerably clear ideas of the power and deadly precision of modern rifles, for the war in South Africa has brought it home to the least military of our population how rifle-bullets can, and unfortunately frequently do, inflict death or terrible injuries on our soldiers at all ranges up to two miles. It is, therefore, all the more curious to reflect that just one hundred years ago rifles were so little in favour that only one regiment, known as the Rifle Corps, was armed entirely with them, the British soldier in general having for his weapon the famous old musket known as Brown Bess. This Rifle Corps, the lineal ancestor of the present Rifle Brigade, celebrated its centenary on August 25th of this present year.

Nowadays, when the soldiers of every civilised, and also of many uncivilised, Powers carry rifles, when we in England live surrounded by innumerable corps of Rifle Volunteers, and when our Prime Minister recommends the whole youth of the country to form Rifle Clubs and perfect themselves in the art of rifle-shooting, it seems incredible that so little was known of rifled arms and the mode of using them in the year 1800 that even among military men they were not uncommonly writ as Rifles, while the strange being who was supposed to perform all sorts of impossible feats with the new weapon was not seldom described as a Rifle Man.

Like very many other useful and indispensable inventions, the principle

of rifling arms had been known for many years, and rifles had been freely used in other countries, before our military authorities would sanction their introduction into our army. During the American War of Independence the Yankees, as they have so often done since, led the way in the adoption of this new invention, and their riflemen did us no considerable damage on many occasions, not only by reason of the accuracy of their fire but also on account of the intelligent adaptation of their movements in extended order to the nature of the ground in which they were fighting,—in other words, by good skirmishing. About the same period sundry Jäger battalions were formed on the Continent armed with rifles and equipped as riflemen. Our authorities, however, still persisted in ignoring this, the latest whim as it was apparently considered, and our armies knew it not.

A Militia regiment, the North York, was one of the first to partially adopt rifles, one company being thus armed in 1795, the remainder carrying the smooth-bore musket. There is a rumour to the effect that Colonel Coote Manningham, the founder of the Rifle Corps, saw this company and that he was so favourably impressed with it that he never ceased urging on our authorities to form a regiment of riflemen in the regular army. Three years later, in 1798, a battalion of German riflemen was added to the 60th Royal American Regiment. It may be mentioned here that the latter corps consisted at this time of four battalions; it

had been specially raised in 1756 for the defence of our Colonies in America, where it served with great distinction for over sixty years, being only brought to England between 1825 and 1830, when its title was changed from 60th Royal American to the now famous one of 60th King's Royal Rifle Corps.

The new battalion, the 5th, was formed from two corps of German Jägers, at the time in British pay, and despatched to America. Our authorities however still remained obdurate as regards the formation of a regiment of British riflemen. Finally in 1799, owing to the strong representations of Colonel Coote Manningham and Lieutenant Colonel the Hon. William Stewart, they at last consented to form an Experimental Corps of Riflemen.

The name of the founder of this, the first regiment of riflemen in our Service, has been kept in memory by the old Rifleman's song, the first verse of which informs us that,

Oh Colonel Coote Manningham he was  
the man,  
For he invented a capital plan,  
He raised a Corps of Riflemen  
To fight for England's glory !

With our present knowledge of the supreme power of rifles in determining the issues of the battle-field it seems almost comical that any doubts should have arisen as to the propriety of raising such a corps. Yet it was not until continued pressure had been brought to bear by the above-named officers, who were assuredly in advance of their times, that on January 17th, 1800, Sir David Dundas, the Commander-in-Chief, issued orders for fourteen regiments of the Line to supply two sergeants and thirty-two rank and file apiece, with a quota of officers, to form the new Experimental Corps.

These details were assembled at Horsham Barracks in April and shortly moved into camp at Swinley, where they were trained in the duties of riflemen. The weapon they were armed with was that manufactured by Mr. Ezekiel Baker, a well-known London gun-maker. Records exist of an "Experiment tried at Woolwich on February 4th, 1800, by Order of the Honourable Board of Ordnance, when this rifle was selected for the armament of the Rifle Corps raised by the Government." It is interesting, and also significant, to note that in this report it is stated that, "There were also many rifles from America and from various parts of the Continent on trial at the same time." The rifle thus chosen, which in the hands of the men of the Rifle Corps was to acquire such a name and fame in our wars during the next fifteen years, was at best but a clumsy weapon viewed from our standpoint of to-day. It weighed nine pounds and a half, the barrel was seven-grooved and thirty inches in length, and it fired a spherical bullet of twenty to the pound. The ball was placed in a greased leather patch, and required no little force to ram it home; at first indeed mallets were issued for this purpose, but they were soon discontinued. The maximum rate at which steady aimed shots could be made was reckoned at one per minute, and it could be fired with considerable accuracy up to two hundred yards, or with extra care and skill up to three hundred. This does not sound very alarming, but it must be remembered that Brown Bess, which threw (an excellent word) a spherical ball of fourteen to the pound, would not carry straight for one hundred yards, and its effective range was scarcely double that distance, whereas the rifle-bullets ranged for hundreds of yards. Hardly

had the newly formed corps had time to shake down than an opportunity arose for its employment on active service. For in July, 1800, an expedition under Admiral Sir John Borlase Warren and Lieutenant-General Sir James Pulteney was ordered to proceed to the northern coast of Spain. Colonel Stewart obtained permission to take out two hundred of the embryo riflemen, and on August 25th they were landed at Ferrol and occupied some heights so as to cover the disembarkation of the remainder of the British force. Here they were sharply attacked by the Spaniards both on this and the following day. Stewart was dangerously wounded, being shot through the body, and three officers and several men were hit. This was the corps's baptism of fire, and August 25th has ever since been celebrated as the regimental birthday of the Rifle Brigade.

The event is the more memorable in that it was the first occasion when British riflemen engaged a foreign foe. As regards the expedition itself, owing to some reasons only too common in our military history of the period, at the moment when the Spaniards were about to surrender the arsenal of Ferrol, the capture of which was the object of the expedition, our soldiers were ordered to re-embark.

Two months prior to the expedition to Ferrol our authorities seem to have come to the conclusion that the experiment of British riflemen promised well, for orders were issued to complete the corps up to strength by drafts from the Fencible regiments serving in Ireland. The bulk of the detachments which had been originally assembled were shortly afterwards ordered to rejoin their corps; this process was carried out gradually, the last detachment not leaving until

the end of the year. Meanwhile, in October the Rifle Corps was officially gazetted, and all the officers who had been temporarily posted to the Experimental Corps of Riflemen in February were now formally appointed to it, their commissions from colonel to subalterns being all antedated to August 25th, the day the regiment had first been under fire.

Incredible almost as it may appear the oppositions of military men in high positions to such a novel and dangerous innovation as the arming of a regiment of British soldiers with a musket that could hit the object it was aimed at still continued. Lord Cornwallis, then Viceroy and Commander-in-Chief in Ireland, objected strongly to giving any recruits for such a purpose, and in support of his views quoted a certain Colonel Würmb, who had commanded a corps of German Jägers in the American War of Independence twenty-five years before, and who, he stated, had requested that firelocks should be substituted for the rifles with which his men were then armed. The only conclusion to be drawn from such a remarkable request is that the rifles in question must have possessed some defect in manufacture or design which rendered them useless in the field. Lord Cornwallis's objections were, however, over-ruled and the Rifle Corps obtained the recruits it required despite his remonstrances. His poor opinion of riflemen remained nevertheless unchanged, and in October, 1800, he complains of having been obliged to give a number of men from the Fencibles of the Line to Colonel Manningham's Rifle Corps, which last he witheringly describes as "a very amusing play-thing."

In justice, it should be mentioned that there was a great deal of nonsense both talked and written about



the use of riflemen at this period. The most extravagant notions were entertained by many enthusiasts (generally civilians), who seized on the new arm as if in verity it were a plaything, and imagined that all sorts of marvellous results must instantly accrue from its introduction. Where these well-meaning people erred was in imagining that a superior weapon will by itself ensure superiority over an enemy, for they had not realised that, to obtain full advantage from a rifle, the men who wielded it must not only be able to shoot straight, but must also be thoroughly skilled in skirmishing and all the duties of riflemen. Lord Cornwallis was, therefore, by no means singular in his prejudice against riflemen, and it was years before the value of the latter received proper recognition.

Curiously enough, the man who seems to have first appreciated the value of the riflemen was a sailor. The soldiers, true to the traditions which caused the same cumbrous water-bottle to be retained from the days of Queen Anne down to the Crimean War, and which, in our own time, has led to our army being ever behind-hand in all modern improvements, such as breech-loaders, magazine-rifles, or quick-firing guns, persisted in severely ignoring the new weapon and its capabilities. The sailor in question was none other than Lord Nelson, who, happening to be a personal friend of Colonel Stewart, on the expedition to Copenhagen in 1801 asked for and obtained the services of some of the Rifle Corps. A hundred riflemen embarked on his flagship the *St. George*, and were subsequently distributed among the line-of-battle-ships of his squadron to act as sharpshooters, and did excellent service. During the battle of Copenhagen

the adjutant of the Rifle Corps, Lieutenant Grant, was decapitated by a cannon-ball, while gallantly fighting the quarter-deck guns of *H.M.S. Isis*. He was the first Rifle officer killed in action, Stewart being the first wounded, as already narrated, at Ferrol in the previous year.

Lord Nelson seems to have been much pleased with the riflemen, and some months after the battle (on October 10th) he wrote to Colonel Stewart expressing a hope that the Government would encrease (*sic*) his Rifle Corps on the grounds that "although it is peace, we must always be on our guard against Corsican treachery ingrafted on French infamy." His wish was not fulfilled until 1805, when a second battalion was added. Before this, however, at the commencement of 1803, the Rifle Corps was incorporated amongst the numbered Regiments of the Line and the numeral 95 bestowed on it; and it was under the official title of the 95th Foot and the colloquial one of *The Rifles* that the young regiment fought its way to fame in the Peninsular War and at Waterloo.

At the famous Camp of Instruction formed at Shorncliffe under Sir John Moore in 1803, the Rifles, in company with their subsequent inseparable companions in arms, the 43rd and 52nd Light Infantry, received that admirable training, based on the Company System, the fruits of which were to be manifested to all the world a few years later in the gallant deeds of the Light Division.

In 1805 the first battalion took part in the abortive expedition to Germany, whence it returned in the spring of 1806. Shortly afterwards three companies of the second battalion sailed for South America, and in January, 1807, after some severe fighting outside Monte Video, they

assisted in the storming and capture of that town. On this occasion the Rifles formed the van of the storming party, their commander was slain and with him a number of men. After the capture of Monte Video, five companies of the first battalion arrived in the River Plate and disembarked, after having been eleven months on board-ship and having made a tour round the Cape of Good Hope on the way; and both battalions took part in the disastrous attempt on Buenos Ayres. The Rifles, with whom was General Craufurd, were sore beset in a convent, but managed to keep their swarming foes at bay all day, till the Spaniards brought up field-pieces with which they swept the intrepid defenders from the flat roofs they occupied, and eventually the whole British force was compelled to surrender. General Craufurd's reasons in writing for surrendering after being thus beset for over eight hours, and after ten officers and some hundred and twenty men of the Rifles had been killed or wounded, are healthy reading now, when we recall certain incidents of a like nature in South Africa.

Meanwhile the portions of the regiment left in England were not idle, for in July, 1807, ten companies proceeded to Denmark and were employed in the operations resulting in the capture of Copenhagen and the destruction of the Danish fleet. No returns exist of their casualties in the fighting at Kioge and elsewhere, but Sir Arthur Wellesley in his despatches incidentally mentions that "a few men of the 95th fell."

In April, 1808, some companies of the first battalion proceeded to Sweden on yet another of the abortive expeditions in which our rulers at that period seemed to revel; and thence they sailed for Portugal to

join Sir Arthur Wellesley. Meanwhile, half the second battalion and other companies of the first had landed at Mondego Bay and formed the advanced guard during the march on Lisbon. On August 15th they encountered the French at Obidos, the first affair of the Peninsular War, and had an officer and several men killed, the first to fall in the great struggle which was not to terminate until April, 1814. A few days later they took part in the battles of Rolica and Vimeiro. It was in these actions that they met for the first time the fifth battalion of the 60th, which, owing to the stress of war had been brought over from America, and which served subsequently throughout the Peninsular campaigns. After the convention of Cintra the Rifles marched to Salamanca with Sir John Moore, and at Sahagun were joined by the rest of their comrades from England who had recently landed at Corunna.

During the terrible retreat on Corunna the Rifles were always in the rear-guard and constantly engaged with the French. At Cacabelos they inflicted very severe losses on the enemy, and a private, one Tom Plunket by name, slew the French General Colbert and also the orderly who rode to his assistance. After the battle of Corunna the 95th returned to England and both battalions were stationed at Hythe, where such was the fame and popularity of the regiment that, upon volunteers being called for it from the Militia, the numbers who came forward enabled a third battalion to be at once added.

Four months after the return from Corunna the first battalion once again sailed for Portugal, and with the 43rd and 52nd Light Infantry formed the celebrated Light Division under Craufurd. Immediately after

landing they were hurried up to the front, and, hearing of the impending battle of Talavera, made the famous forced march of some sixty miles in twenty-six hours, though they arrived on the battlefield too late to take a share in the victory.

The Rifles, however, were not entirely unrepresented in this battle, for about a hundred men of the first battalion and seventy-five of the second had remained in Portugal after the campaign of 1808. These served as a Rifle Company under Major Bunbury, and did excellent service at the passage of the Douro and the capture of Oporto in May, 1809, and were subsequently present at Talavera. In 1849 ten survivors of this little band were still living and were granted the Talavera clasp. Both at the Douro and at Talavera the men of the 95th, though so few in number, were distinguished by being specially mentioned by Sir Arthur Wellesley in his despatches.

Whilst the first battalion was thus engaged in Spain, the second was ordered to the Low Countries and assisted at the siege and capture of Flushing. But the deadly malaria of Walcheren told heavily on the British forces, and the second battalion, in addition to its losses during the expedition, buried no less than one hundred and thirty-three men after its return to Hythe in September. It had thus been twice decimated within nine months.

It would be impossible here to give more than the merest outline of the services of the three battalions of the 95th Rifles during the six years of the Peninsular War. The number and variety of these may be gauged from the fact that out of the eighteen great battles, stormings, and sieges for which "honours" were granted to the army, the 95th took part, and frequently a leading part, in all save

one, Beresford's fight at Albuhera. When in 1848 the long deferred medal was issued to the survivors of the war, six hundred and ninety veterans were granted medals carrying three thousand four hundred and sixty-nine clasps; one man, who assuredly must have owned a charmed life, being given a medal with fourteen clasps covering the period from Roliça to Toulouse.

But in addition to the big battles, the names of which, owing to their being carried on the colours and appointments of our regiments, are tolerably familiar to the public, there were a number of important and often most desperately contested actions, not officially classed as general actions and hence, for the most part, long since forgotten. In the history of a regiment these are not infrequently of greater importance, and a source of far greater pride to the members of the corps, than is some great battle, famous in history, in which it may have been but slightly engaged. Thus, the campaign of 1810 commenced with an affair of posts, as such minor actions are somewhat disparagingly termed, which, owing to time and local conditions, created no small stir in our army. The most advanced post of the Light Division was at the bridge of Barba del Puerco on the river Agueda, which was held by a company of Rifles with two others in immediate support. On a wet and stormy night in March a picked body of French Grenadiers, six hundred strong, attempted to surprise the post and a desperate hand to hand encounter ensued in which the Rifles, although greatly outnumbered, were victorious. Wellington, never very prodigal in praise, directed that a special complimentary order should be issued on the subject, which is particularly interesting as showing

the current opinion of riflemen in those days.

The action reflects great honour on the regiment inasmuch as it was of the sort that riflemen of other armies would shun. In other armies, the rifle is considered as ill-calculated for close action with an enemy armed with musquet and bayonet, but the 95th Regiment have proved that the rifle in the hands of a British soldier is a fully efficient weapon to enable him to defeat the French in the closest fight.

Four days later the celebrated combat of the Coa was fought, in which the Light Division was severely handled by Marshal Ney, the 95th alone losing twelve officers and sixty-six men killed or wounded. In September was fought the battle of Busaco, where the Division made their overwhelming charge on Loison's column of attack at the moment when the latter had almost gained the British position.

Throughout the winter of 1810-11, while the British army lay in security behind the lines of Torres Vedras, the Rifles were constantly in touch with the French advanced posts; and it was during this time that two companies of the regiment took part in that successful defence of Tarifa, which has been celebrated by Napier as a great and splendid exploit. A few months later these companies as well as the recently raised third battalion, were engaged at Barrosa, which Wellington described in his despatches as the hardest action that had as yet been fought.

In the same month that witnessed Victor's defeat at Barrosa, Massena found himself compelled to retire from before the lines of Torres Vedras. The Light Division followed in hot pursuit, and between March 8th and 28th very sharp rear-guard actions were fought on eight occasions, that of the Redinha being the most severe.

It was on this day that the Division again earned the special praise of Lord Wellington for the gallant style in which they drove the French from a strong position in a wood.

Early in April the action of Sabugal was fought, followed by sundry minor affairs, and in May came the battle of Fuentes de Onoro in which all three battalions of the Rifles were engaged. Subsequently, the French having collected in great force, Wellington was compelled to retire behind the Coa.

In January, 1812, Ciudad Rodrigo was besieged and stormed, but at a terrible cost; Craufurd was killed, and the Rifles lost seven officers and sixty-four men. The storming of Badajoz, which followed in April, was a still bloodier business, and in these two affairs Wellington declared that he "lost the flower of his army." The storming party of the Light Division was led by Major O'Hare of the Rifles, and the losses of the latter were appalling, nine officers and fifty-seven men being killed and fourteen officers with two hundred and twenty-five men wounded, many of whom subsequently succumbed. O'Hare, on moving off at the head of the stormers, as he shook hands with a brother-officer, bid him farewell in these words, "A lieutenant-colonel, or cold meat in a few hours." His body was found on the top of the breach at daylight.

Wellington now advanced into Spain, and after the combats of Castrejon and the Guarena, and much manœuvring both on his part and on that of Marmont, he defeated the French at Salamanca, on which occasion, for once in a way, the Rifles escaped with few casualties. They subsequently took part in the advance on Madrid, in which capital they remained for two months.

During the retreat from Madrid the two companies of the second battalion which had fought at Barrosa

rejoined the regiment. They had not been idle in the interval, having assisted at the capture of Seville and subsequently in the successful defence of the bridge of Aranjuez against Soult's attacks.

In May, 1813, the British army once again advanced, and on June 18th the Light Division drove the French from San Millan. Three days later the decisive battle of Vittoria was fought, in which the Rifles had the honour of capturing the first three guns which fell into our hands. In the subsequent pursuit they completed their job by capturing the last of the hundred and fifty French guns which formed part of the trophies of this great victory.

Between July 15th and August 2nd they were engaged in various affairs in the Pyrenees, and on August 31st two companies, which were holding the bridge of Vera across the Bidassoa, were attacked by a French division and lost five officers and seventy-one men killed or wounded. On the same day as this catastrophe took place, the fortress of San Sebastian was stormed, each battalion finding an officer and fifty volunteers for this desperate service, many of whom fell.

After this there was a brief lull in the fighting, but on October 7th the advance was resumed, and to the Light Division was entrusted the tremendous task of forcing the Pass of Vera. The French had made good use of the two months they had been in occupation of the mountains east of the Bidassoa, and every hilltop and ridge was crowned with redoubts and trenchworks. It is, therefore, hardly surprising that the Rifles, although victorious, lost heavily, nine officers and one hundred and ninety-two men being killed or wounded.

The Rifle Brigade does not carry in its appointments the honour of Pyrenees to this day, on the technical

grounds that the battles of the Pyrenees were the two combats of Sauron on July 28th and 30th near Pampeluna, when Soult's attempts to relieve that place were successfully met. But from July 15th, when the Rifles encountered and drove the French from the heights of Santa Barbara, until October 7th when they captured the Pass of Vera, they were constantly fighting in the Pyrenees and lost fifteen officers and close on three hundred men. With delightful inconsistency, when the medal was issued in 1848, our military authorities granted the survivors of the fighting in the Pyrenees the clasp inscribed *Pyrenees*; but the honour of Pyrenees has been withheld to this day.

After this followed the battles of the Nive, the Nivelles, and Orthez, interspersed among which were sundry minor affairs.

March 20th, 1814, was a memorable day in the history of the regiment. General Harispé's division was very strongly posted on some high ground covering the town of Tarbes against which the Light Division was launched, the three battalions of the Rifles being in front, the remainder in reserve, ready to support them. But such was the hardihood and determination of the attackers that they succeeded, unaided, in dislodging their opponents, losing in the operation twelve officers and over eighty men. Not a shot was fired this day save by the Rifles, hence, the affair has ever been viewed as the regimental fight *par excellence* of the corps. The final battle of the great war was fought at Toulouse on April 18th, and shortly afterwards the three battalions embarked at Bordeaux for England.

While the Peninsular War was thus being brought to so brilliant a termination, another expedition was sent to Flanders, which included amongst

its numbers two companies of the first and second battalions of the Rifles and two companies of the third. There was some sharp fighting at Merxem, and unsuccessful attempts on Antwerp and Bergen-op-Zoom. On the cessation of hostilities in April, due to the entry of the Allies into Paris, these companies remained in Flanders as part of the garrison there; they subsequently rejoined the regiment on its arrival in 1815, and fought at Waterloo.

Within three months of the return of the third battalion from Bordeaux, five companies were ordered to embark on secret service, which proved to be none other than the New Orleans expedition. The fighting which marked the advance of the British forces after their disembarkation at Pine Island in many ways bears a marked similarity to some of our recent experiences in South Africa, and shows the exceptional difficulties under which troops labour when opposed to an enemy speaking the same language. Thus in a very sharp attack on our outposts on the banks of the Mississippi, on the night of December 22nd, 1813, the Yankees constantly called out, "Come on, my brave 95th," and similar encouraging words, and upon the men rallying to the cry and advancing, shot them down at close quarters. Similarly during the famous sortie of the second battalion of the Rifle Brigade on the night of December 10th, 1899, from Ladysmith, when the Boers' big gun was captured and destroyed by us, the enemy quickly caught the names of our officers and called out "Captain —, bring your company this way," or, "This way — company," and upon our officers and men moving to the points indicated they were instantly shot. Those only who have participated in the anxieties and dangers of night operations in an enemy's country can realise how

difficult it is to prevent our men from falling victims to such apparently simple stratagems.

In the disastrous assault on the lines of New Orleans in January, 1815, the riflemen covered the front, and upon the failure of the main attack, were left for hours unsupported close up to the edge of the ditch. Eventually they withdrew with a loss of seven officers and more than a hundred men.

In the Waterloo campaign the first battalion of the 95th were the first British soldiers to contest the advance of Ney's troops at Quatre Bras and drive them from the wood of Piermont. On the following day the two battalions of the regiment had the honour of being the only infantry with Wellington's rear-guard in the retirement on Waterloo.

At the great battle, the first battalion were in Picton's Division and were charged with the defence of the cross-roads north of La Haye Sainte. The second battalion and two companies of the third were in Adam's Brigade, and took part in the famous charge on the French Imperial Guard, which, as all the world knows, was made on the initiative of Colborne who commanded the 52nd Light Infantry. The Duke ordered up the second battalion on their left, and the 71st Highland Light Infantry and two companies of the third battalion on their right. The Imperial Guard, headed and charged by Maitland's Brigade of Guards and taken on their left flank by Adam's Brigade, were overwhelmed; and with the defeat of the Guard, the rout of the French army was complete. The losses of the Rifles in the two days' fighting of the Waterloo campaign were thirty-nine officers and four hundred and fifty-five men killed and wounded. They subsequently marched on Paris and were joined



there by the companies of the third battalion recently returned from New Orleans.

It is characteristic of the light-heartedness of the British soldier that upon the three battalions finding themselves united at St. Germain-en-Laye on August 25th, 1815, they celebrated the anniversary of Ferrol, the birthday of the regiment, by a regimental dinner. This, however, was not the first of these functions, one having taken place two years earlier amidst the fighting in the Pyrenees.

In February, 1816, the regiment was removed from among the regiments of the Line and ordered to be styled the Rifle Brigade.

During the three years following Waterloo it formed part of the Army of Occupation in France, and on the general reduction of the army in 1818 the third battalion was disbanded, a proportion of the officers and men being drafted into the other battalions, a similar fate befalling the fifth battalion of the 60th. And now, for the first time in the history of the regiment, there ensued a period of prolonged peace. During the eighteen years that had elapsed since its first formation it had been almost constantly employed in war. In Europe the green jackets of the riflemen had been seen in France, Germany, Denmark, Sweden, the Netherlands, Spain and Portugal, while in the New World they had fought both in North and South America.

It was not until 1846, after many years of peace, that the first battalion was again ordered on service, this time to the Cape of Good Hope to assist in quelling the revolt among the Kaffir tribes in Cape Colony. After months of arduous marching and desultory skirmishing, the expedition was brought to a conclusion.

This was at the end of 1847, but hardly had the Kaffirs been thus quieted than the Dutch Boers in the north of Cape Colony and beyond the Orange River broke into rebellion. An expedition under Sir Harry Smith, an old Rifle officer, at once started north, two companies of the Rifle Brigade accompanying it. At Boom Plaatz, about fifty miles southwest of Bloemfontein, the Boers, over twenty-five hundred strong, held a defensive position on some *kopjes* which they had fortified in the usual manner with stone *schanzes*. The first attack of the Colonials having met with a check, the riflemen advanced in extended order and, despite a heavy and well-aimed fire, succeeded in closing on the enemy with fixed bayonets and driving them from two successive positions. It was a sharp affair while it lasted, the companies losing a captain and six men shot dead and another officer and eight men wounded. It is interesting to note that the Boers of 1848 were no more partial to the bayonet than are those of 1900. No doubt, had the enemy been armed with magazine-rifles in place of muzzle-loaders, our casualties would have been far heavier, if indeed the position could have been captured at all. The severity of the Boer fire may well be judged from Sir Harry Smith's description of the fight: "This outburst of rebels," he wrote, "has cost us as smart an affair as I ever witnessed." Since the victor of Aliwal had also fought at Monte Video, at Buenos Ayres, throughout the Peninsular War, at New Orleans, and at Waterloo, he was a reasonably good judge of what might be described as "a smart affair."

The first battalion returned to England in the summer of 1850, and another outbreak of Kaffirs taking place during the following year, it

was again sent out to the Cape and had a second experience of desultory warfare for over a year. One company took part in the Basuto War and the action of the Berea.

Hitherto the only two regiments armed with rifles in our Army were the 60th and the Rifle Brigade. In 1838 the Baker rifle, the original flintlock-weapon of the Rifle Corps in 1800, which had been adopted in 1808 by the 60th, was exchanged for the two-grooved percussion Brunswick rifle. This in turn gave way to the Minié which was issued in 1853 to the 60th and Rifle Brigade, and, shortly after, to the whole army.

Upon the outbreak of the Crimean War both battalions were despatched to the East. At the Alma the second battalion covered the front in the advance: the first battalion was slightly engaged at Balaclava; and at Inkermann both battalions lost heavily in that desperate day's fighting. A very gallant exploit was performed by one hundred and fifty riflemen under Lieutenant Tryon in November, 1854, when some Russian rifle-pits were stormed, Tryon and several men being killed. This affair created some stir, and the French Commander-in-Chief, Marshal Canrobert, issued a general order eulogising the gallantry of the riflemen and ordered it to be read at the head of every regiment in the French Army. In the unsuccessful assault on the Redan on June 18th, 1855, both battalions again lost heavily. On September 8th the final assault was delivered, and on this occasion the second battalion lost ten officers and one hundred and sixty men killed or wounded.

Some idea may be formed of the severity and danger of the duty during the great siege from the fact that, exclusive of losses in the actions and affairs aforesaid, the two battalions

lost in the trenches one hundred and seventy-five men killed and one hundred and eighty-nine wounded. Altogether, in the whole campaign the two battalions lost nine officers and two hundred and eighty-three men killed in action or dead of wounds, and two officers and six hundred and forty-eight men who died of disease. A marble memorial has this year been placed in the British cemetery on Cathcart's Hill outside Sebastopol, recording the fact that eleven officers and nine hundred and thirty-one men of the Rifle Brigade lost their lives during the Eastern Campaign of 1854-5. The Russian Government, with excellent taste, have decreed the cemetery at Cathcart's Hill to be British territory for ever.

In 1855 a third battalion was raised for a second time, and in 1857 a fourth was added, since which year the regiment has consisted of four battalions. Of late years several Militia and Volunteer battalions have been attached to it under the Territorial System.

In 1857 the second and third battalions were sent to India to aid in suppressing the Mutiny. They saw a great deal of sharp fighting about Cawnpore and at the relief of Lucknow in 1858, and in the following year in the Central India campaign. The celebrated Camel Corps, which did such excellent service in hunting down Tantia Topce, was composed of two hundred men from these battalions with some Sikhs.

In 1864 the third battalion was in the Mohmund expedition on the North-West Frontier which terminated with the fight at Shubkudder.

In 1867 the Enfield muzzle-loading rifle which had supplanted the Minié during the Crimean War, was in turn replaced by the Snider-Enfield breech-loader.

In 1873-4 the second battalion

served under Sir Garnet Wolseley in the Ashantee expedition, and during the advance to Coomassie three officers and thirty-five men were wounded, several of whom died. Many men also died from the effects of the deadly climate after the return of the expedition.

In 1874 the Martini-Henry breech-loader, a hammerless rifle, replaced the Snider.

Another expedition on the North-West Frontier, this time against the Jowakis, was made in 1877, the fourth battalion being then employed on active service for the first time. In the following year the same battalion saw service in the Afghan War and was present at the capture of Ali Musjid. Three years later it was again engaged on the North-West Frontier against the Waziris.

Detachments of the second and third battalions served with detachments of the 60th in the Rifle Company of the Camel Corps in the Nile Expeditionary Force of 1884-5, marched across the desert under Sir Herbert Stewart, and fought at Abu Klea and the subsequent engagements in the attempt to save General Gordon.

The conquest of Burmah gave the first battalion plenty of hard work from 1885 to 1887, and although but few men were killed, a number of officers and men succumbed to the unhealthy climate. In 1888 the fourth battalion also served in Burmah, and a portion of it took part in the Karen expedition of 1889.

In 1890 the Lee-Metford magazine-rifle was issued in place of the Martini-Henry.

In 1895-6 a detachment of the second battalion served in the second Ashantee expedition, which resulted in the occupation of Coomassie; and shortly after, in 1896-7, detachments of the second and fourth battalions, with detachments from the 60th,

were formed into the Rifle Company which took part in suppressing the rebellion in Mashonaland.

In 1897 the third battalion was sent on the disastrous expedition into the Tochi Valley, where it lost three officers and upwards of a hundred men from fever and dysentery, though hardly firing a shot.

In the following year the second battalion served in the expedition to Khartoum and the action of Omdurman.

Lastly, in 1899, both the first and second battalions proceeded to South Africa. The second battalion was among those shut up in Ladysmith, and one of the most brilliant incidents of that memorable siege was the night-sortie made by the battalion to destroy a heavy gun which was doing damage to the beleaguered garrison. This affair was carried out with conspicuous success, the riflemen having to fight their way back through the Boer forces, which they did with a loss of four officers and sixty-four men killed or wounded. Meanwhile the first battalion was engaged in Sir Redvers Buller's desperate efforts to relieve Ladysmith, and was particularly mentioned in the action of Vaal Krantz. The end of the century of the regiment's existence, August 25th, 1900, found these two battalions still on active service in South Africa, and within a few hours of that century's completion the second battalion was engaged in the assault on the Boer position of Bergendal, near Machadodorp, as to which Lord Roberts telegraphed: "*The kopjes* were brilliantly assaulted by the second battalion of the Rifle Brigade. The place is a natural fortress surrounded by a glacier of fifteen hundred yards absolutely without cover. It was taken with great dash." Captains Lysley, Stewart, and Campbell, with twenty-one men were killed or

died of wounds; and Colonel Metcalfe, "who led his regiment most gallantly, and whose dispositions were excellent," was severely wounded. Four other officers and fifty-four men were also wounded. It would be difficult to imagine a more fitting termination to a century of fighting.

Since the formation of the regiment upwards of seventy officers and one thousand men have been killed in action, and some two hundred and fifty officers and three thousand men have been wounded. Such, at least, are the figures given by the official casualty-returns, but in a large number of cases during the wars at the beginning of the century these returns are incomplete or altogether missing. How many thousands of men of the 95th Rifles or of the Rifle Brigade have lost their lives in the service of their country from the effects of wounds or through disease it is hard to estimate. If Mr. W. B. Hodge's elaborate calculations of the mortality during the great war (1793-1815) be accepted, the number cannot be less than six and in all probability is over seven thousand.

It is a notable fact that, although England has been engaged in only one great war (the Crimean) since the battle of Waterloo, with the exception of the twenty-seven long years of inaction which followed the withdrawal of our Army of Occupation from France in 1818, there have been only about a score of years in the remainder of the nineteenth cen-

tury during which the doors of the Temple of Janus, so far as concerns the Rifle Brigade, have been closed. In the north aisle of Winchester Cathedral a stained glass window has recently been put up by the Brigade, the general design of which is to illustrate the doctrine of self-sacrifice for the good of others. In the two top-lights of the central division are the Crucifixion, with the figure of the Roman Centurion who in so remarkable a manner confessed to the humanity and divinity of our Lord in His humiliation. This soldier's confession, "Truly this man was the Son of God," forms, as it were, the text for the whole composition. In the side-lights and below are a series of martyrs and heroes who have "laid down their lives for the Brethren." In the apex of the window is the regimental badge, and on the wall below is a brass tablet containing a roll of the various actions and campaigns (no less than sixty in number) in which the regiment has been engaged since its formation, and in which the men, whose memory is thus preserved, fought and died in the service of their sovereign and country. It begins with *Ferrol, 1800*, and ends with *South Africa, 1900*,—a Century of Fighting indeed!

Their bones are dust,  
Their good swords rust,  
Their souls are with the Saints, we  
trust.

WILLOUGHBY VERNER.

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